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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HEAD: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

by

(C)

Landis Lee Jackson

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1987

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THE ROLE OF THE BUSINESS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HEAD:
A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

submitted by Landis Lee Jackson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

.....
Supervisor

.....

.....

Date September 3, 1987..

ABSTRACT

An interest in the role of the business education department head developed because of the personal experience of the researcher. During this experience some inconsistencies in what was stated in the job description and what was expected by other people within and outside the school were felt. Was this experience isolated?

This study is qualitative in nature. The researcher attempted to gain a deeper understanding of what the business education department head role was, as perceived by department heads.

To research this question, the researcher would interview nine business education department heads, with varying years of experience in urban and rural schools. The methodology used was to interview and observe participants, to collect relevant documentation and to write a journal.

Each participant was interviewed three times at their school. The interviews were organized through an interview guide. The topics selected for each interview were based on literature, the researchers' personal experience and the previous interview. Each interview was taped, and then personally transcribed.

A job description was collected from all but one

department head. The job descriptions were given to department heads following their appointment to the department head position.

After the interviews were conducted, each department head was observed for one or two days. The purpose of the observation was to see who the department head interacted with outside their scheduled teaching time, and the purpose of this interaction.

Journal entries were written following each scheduled interview and throughout the observation. The comments were reflected on, at the end of the day and allowed the researcher to question personal beliefs about business education.

The data was analyzed and cross-referenced with other types of data. Considerable time was also spent in peer debriefing to ensure the researcher was interpreting the data as the department heads perceived their role.

Three common themes emerged from the data: (1) there are specific qualities that a teacher must possess in order to be considered for the department head position, (2) there are a number of activities that deparmtent heads are expected to perform, some are identified in the job description and others are in addition, (3) there are a number of responsibilities that the department head is expected to carry out, primarily to communicate. These three themes affect the image of business education that is portrayed to people within and outside the school.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is qualitative in nature using a number of different data collection techniques. Interviews, observations, documentation and journal writing are tools used. The study is directed toward business education department heads in a high school setting. Attempts were made to gain a deeper understanding of the department head's role as viewed by each department head.

Need for the Study

In the survey the majority of research studies that address the department head's role utilized questionnaires and were conducted in the United States. In the early studies questionnaires were mailed to principals, superintendents, teachers or department heads. In the most recent studies questionnaires usually were mailed only to department heads.

Before research can be applied to the department head's role, data should be acquired from department heads presently in that position. Rather than limiting the department heads to activities that are listed on a questionnaire, the department heads should be encouraged to discuss their role from their own experience. Time should be taken to allow department heads to

verbalize their opinions about their role. This may improve communication between the different levels of administration and teachers. Support, encouragement, and professional growth may be more relevant and appropriate if administrators understand the department head's perspective.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to come to an understanding of business education department head's perceptions of their role. This study provides a basis for department heads to question their activities within their school. Are they engaged in meaningful activities for the improvement of curriculum within their departments? Are all these activities appropriate for them to perform or should some be delegated? This study requires business education department heads to question the past, present, and future of the business education department in the secondary school.

Review of the Literature

Research studies that focus on the department head have been reported from the principal's or the department head's perspective, primarily through questionnaires. Business education department heads were involved in only a few of these studies.

Goldstein (1952) asked business education department heads in one region of the United States to complete a checklist. The purpose of this checklist was to identify present practices

that department heads were engaged in and felt to be important, practices that would be ideal and they would like to be engaged in if the department heads were unrestricted, or poor practices that prevented the department heads from performing a better job. An interview form was designed to supplement the data obtained from the checklist. Department heads identified and voted by business education professors as good department heads were interviewed either in person or through correspondence.

The findings of the study revealed that some of the most common present practices that department heads engaged in were initiating new teachers into the department, conferring with administrators about school matters, participating in curriculum development, and maintaining records. Department heads suggested that if they were not restricted in any way in the future they would like to identify and assist in the acquisition of new facilities and equipment, to improve the articulation of the program, to participate more actively in student placement, and to take on a leadership role in curriculum adaptation and modification. Department heads felt a poor condition they experienced was a lack of time to carry out expected tasks because of too many clerical duties and teaching periods. It was also stated that there was a lack of money and opportunity to exercise leadership.

This study concluded that department heads were not using their expertise in business education to contribute to the operation of the school. Department heads were not delegating

their responsibilities to other department members or students in order to free them to enhance the curricular development and coordination of the program. It was also noted that department heads were identifying areas of concern but were not attempting to solve the problem. They were evading the issues.

Clark (1969) surveyed department heads in Alberta high schools regarding the activities they perform. The analysis was based on responses from 24 school superintendents and 180 department heads selected from high schools with more than 25 teachers. In Alberta department heads were appointed more often in business education than other subject areas.

Superintendents felt that department heads should be involved in in-servicing new department members and improving communication between the administrators and the department members. The findings of this study concluded that department heads were involved in communication; provision of materials, supplies and equipment; instructional leadership; and organization of the department. Department heads felt that added duties should include requisitioning of department supplies, chairing of meetings, and engaging in evaluation within the program. Department heads felt they should not conduct demonstration lessons, be involved in appraisal of department members or act as substitute teachers. It was felt by department heads that they should be timetabling, developing in-service for the department, and serving as administrative staff.

The most important qualities as identified by department heads for their position were leadership and teaching ability; the least important qualities, graduate study, seniority, and popularity among department members. The department heads felt that their important strengths were their ability to coordinate levels of instruction and to offer educational leadership. Serious problems identified were the lack of time and the lack of a defined role.

Godwin (1972) specifically addressed the role of the business education department head. The analysis was based on questionnaires received from 197 business education department heads in the state of New Jersey.

In this study the role was reported as a number of different duties that the department head performed. The major duties identified were maintaining a complete inventory, acting as liaison between department members and administrators, contacting vendors about up-to-date equipment and textbooks, keeping equipment maintained, orienting new teachers, providing leadership for changing and implementing business education curriculum, and attending meetings as department representative. Duties that were not performed and should not be performed were managing the school bookstore, supervising clerical services for the school, and conducting the work experience program.

There appeared to be disagreement between the duties that were performed and should be performed. These included the

responsibility of program articulation outside the school setting, follow-up study of recent graduates, chairing the community advisory committee, and coordination of business-industry business days.

Gorman (1980) surveyed and compared high school principals, business education department heads, and business education teachers about the activities, duties, and responsibilities of the business education department head. The sample consisted of schools in the north-central region in the United States that were members of the National Business Education Association. A questionnaire was mailed to 1,000 randomly selected schools. Principals were asked to forward a questionnaire to the business education department head and a teacher within the business education department. There were a total of 88 activities that were grouped into the following 9 categories: staffing, professional development, evaluation, curriculum, budgeting, supplies/equipment/resources, public relations, intradepartment/intraschool relations, and miscellaneous. Each respondent ranked the importance of the business education department head's activities.

As the Gorman study was important in developing the interview guide for this study, a detailed list of the importance of the categories by various participants is given below.

Principals rated the following activities more important than the business education department heads or teachers.

1. stimulate professional experiences and contact among members of the department.
2. discuss at regular intervals the latest developments with the department.
3. organize a professional library.
4. conduct demonstration lessons for business education teachers.
5. assist with the development of in-service programs to meet specific needs of the department.
6. encourage business education teachers to videotape a lesson and have it critiqued by a business educator.
7. provide departmental leadership in selection.
8. develop and utilize resources, equipment and methodologies.
9. coordinate textbook evaluation studies.
10. maintain departmental textbook and other inventories.
11. assist in developing goals for each course.
12. articulate the program to different grade levels and between the school and vocational centers.
13. coordinate student participation in contests and conferences.
14. keep the principal informed of department needs.
15. file minutes of department meetings with the principal.
16. check and approve semester examinations given within the department.

Principals rated the following activities more important than business education teachers.

1. encourage members to join professional organizations.
2. suggest possible conferences for business education teachers to attend.
3. require teachers to videotape one lesson to be critiqued by a fellow business educator.
4. informally observe teachers for the purpose of giving instructional advice.
5. assist the district curriculum coordinator in developing and revising the curriculum.
6. serve as two-way communication link between administrators and department.
7. keep principal informed of departmental problems.
8. organize one departmental meeting a month.
9. to direct research relative to departmental activities.

Principals rated the following activities more important than the business education department heads.

1. maintain departmental inventories of equipment.

2. articulate the departmental program between high school and junior high.
3. promote departmental public relations using various means of media.
4. work closely with the guidance staff in solving student problems.
5. recommend summer work projects for the business education teachers.

Department heads rated the following activity more important than principals or business education teachers.

1. assist the prinicipal with the task of assigning teachers to specific classes in a manner that utilized staff effectively.

Department heads rated the following activity more important than the business education teachers.

1. belong to professional organizations.

Department heads rated the following activities more important than principals.

1. maintain an open laboratory area for student use.
2. attempt to implement suggestions made by departmental teachers.
3. receive calls from absent teachers, relay messages to substitutes, and assist substitutes in taking charge of classes.

Teachers rated the following activities more important than principals.

1. make recommendations for teacher dismissal.
2. conduct post-observational conferences with teachers formally observed.
3. prepare an annual budget.
4. keep records of expenditures.
5. determine priority of teacher requests.
6. prepare bid specifications for equipment purchases.
7. keep a record of purchases.
8. utilize a program for student recruitment.
9. receive calls from absent teachers.

Teachers rated the following activity more important than department heads.

1. recommend summer work projects for the business education teachers.

Teachers rated the following activities more important than department heads and principals.

1. make recommendations for teacher tenure.
2. consult with the teachers when preparing budget.
3. prepare bid specifications for new equipment purchases.
4. advise counsellors concerning departmental policies including student requirements.

Department heads and teachers rated the following activities more important than principals.

1. assist the principal in screening and selecting personnel.
2. make recommendations for teacher tenure.
3. complete written form for personnel records of teachers formally evaluated.

A conclusion of this study was that department heads, teachers and principals differ substantially in ranking the activities and responsibilities that were performed by a department head.

Dauwalder (1983) analyzed the Q-sorts of 173 business education department heads who were members of the National Association for Business Teacher Education. The purpose of this study was to develop, validate, and rank a list of challenges facing business education as identified by business education department heads.

The conclusions included a need for curricular change.

Three curricular-related challenges were rated high. Current course offerings were essential to meet the needs of the students. Curricular change should not be limited to only the current course offerings. Present student recruiting efforts do not seem to be sufficient.

Two other areas of concern were the updating of business teachers and the value of research in business education. A positive attitude toward technological change is a prerequisite for updating teachers. In-service programs can assist business educators in updating their skills and increasing their awareness of practical skills required in business. This can be designed in summer or release-time work experience programs. There was little agreement among business educators about the value of research. It was reported that little effort has been made to utilize the results of research that has been conducted or is forthcoming.

Kottkamp (1985) analyzed questionnaires of 225 high school department heads from the state of New Jersey. The purpose of this study was to measure role conflict, role ambiguity, powerlessness, burnout, and personal and department level contextual variables among department heads.

Findings of this study indicated that perceived role conflict and ambiguity related to the feeling of powerlessness. The results supported the theory that role conflict and ambiguity are important organizational stressors and are related to burnout. Even though department heads identified

problems with role conflict and ambiguity, they were not suffering from high degrees of burnout. One explanation was the decreased number of hours that department heads spend in close contact with students. It was suggested that the time allowed for department head duties provided time for the department head to "shift emotional gears and lessen stress."

Summary

The research that has been conducted on the department head's role has involved questionnares mailed out to superintendents, principals, department heads and teachers. There has been inconsistencies among the expectations of the various stakeholder groups. Each group holds different views about the role of the business education department head.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

An interest in the role of the business education department head emerged because of personal experience of being a department head for five months. It was felt that people held different opinions and expectations of the role of a department head. Was this feeling isolated and associated with the particular schools or was it more universal?

An extensive search of the literature was completed manually through indexes and electronically through computerized data bases. Sources searched were: The Business Education Index, Current Index to Journals in Education, Dissertation Abstracts International, Educational Resource Information Center, and the University of Alberta Education Thesis Index. Descriptors that were used in this search were administration, business education, department head, role, and secondary education. The research method designed for this study was based on the principles of Guba's text Naturalistic Inquiry. A full-day workshop conducted by Guba and sponsored by the Canadian Evaluation Society was attended in Banff on April 28, 1986. The terms used when describing the methodology

are terms frequently used by Guba.

Naturalistic Approach

One process of conducting qualitative research is through naturalistic inquiry. The naturalistic approach is based on Guba's literature. Guba (1982, page 234) suggests that naturalistic inquiry "incorporates the following criteria: it is carried out in a natural setting, that it uses the case study format and relies heavily on qualitative rather than quantitive methods."

Naturalistic inquiry focuses on the holistic view of a situation and tolerates real world conditions. This research paradigm is designed to allow a contextual richness to the research and allows a deeper level of understanding to be reached. Sensitivity is developed between the researcher, the subject, and the situation as all interact and influence each other. A feeling of trust is established between the parties so that a true perception of the situation can be achieved. Similiarities as well as differences in the data collected are addressed. From the data a theory is developed based on multiple examples within the situation.

Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiry

Credibility of the research findings is based on the researcher's correct interpretation of the participant's realities. The interpretation is achieved through a lengthy duration at the site, persistent observation, peer debriefing,

and triangulation.

Transferability of data is possible if the description attained has been collected using various types of data collection in order to interpret an experience of the situation and facilitate judgements about the data. The data is collected through various techniques. Dependability is achieved through the use of overlapping techniques allowing for a cross-check of the data. Triangulation, journal writing, coding, and thematizing confirm the data.

Design

Selection of Department Heads

Nine business education department heads are involved in the study. The department heads are employed by four different school boards including both public and separate boards at the high school level, grades 10-12. In this study a small business education department has three or less department members. A large business education department has four or more department members. See Table I, page 15.

Development of Interview Guide

Spradley (1979, page 58) comments that "the ethnographic interview is viewed as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants." Three elements are essential in an ethnographic interview. They are the focus, direction and interpretation of each interview. Three

TABLE I

DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENT HEADS

Name	Location	Years Experience	Minutes to Perform Duties	Remuneration
Don, D	Rural	5 years	No time	None
Tom, T	City	< 5 years	80 min/day	Yes
Pat, P	City	> 5 years	80 min/day	Yes
Steven, S	City	> 5 years	60 min/day	Yes
Cindy, C	Rural	< 5 years	40 min/day	Yes
Sally, S	City	> 5 years	60 min/day	Yes
Rob, R	City	< 5 years	60 min/day	Yes
Carole, C	City	< 5 years	64 min/3 times a week	Yes
Betty, B	Rural	< 5 years	No time	None

different types of questions are utilized. Descriptive questions collect a sample of the participants' language. Structural questions discover how the participant has organized their knowledge. Contrast questions determine what a participant means by various terms used.

A guide was developed. The guide was comprised of topics rather than individual questions that had to be raised with the participants. See Appendix A, page 114. The topics were developed from a review of the literature, personal experience, and an analysis of each interview. In the review of the literature certain topics recurred throughout the research studies. These topics were used in the interview guide for the

initial interview. Topics were added based on personal experience of being a business education department head. After each interview revisions were made to the interview guide based on the topics that were discussed or comments made by the participants during the interview.

On-site Observation

Additional data was collected through observation of the business education department heads outside their classroom instruction time. The observations included the type of activities they were engaged in, any interaction with other people, and the reason for this interaction. Each participant was observed for one or two days. While the observation was in process a journal was written to record the interaction that occurred, the reason for this interaction, and the activity. The journal was not shared with the department heads. Anonymity was maintained in the journal as each department head was assigned a pseudonym.

Field Work

Selection of Sites

The research was carried out in a large city and the surrounding area. To include the concerns of department heads in smaller jurisdictions a decision was made to include department heads from a large city and its surrounding rural area. A cross-section of department heads were included, business education department heads from the public and separate

school boards and department heads with varying years of administrative experience.

Gaining Access. The first contact with business education department heads in the city was at the system's monthly department heads' meeting. The purpose of this contact was to meet the various business education department heads. I was introduced as a department head from another city. This established a degree of credibility with the department heads. Following an introduction the department heads were asked what they felt were issues in business education that needed to be researched. Discussion followed. After the formal meeting concluded some of the department heads informally introduced themselves and expressed an interest in being participants in the research.

A list of the interested city business education department heads was compiled. After the research topic of the role of business education department head was identified department heads who had expressed an interest in this topic were contacted. Department heads were selected for the study based on different years of department head experience as well as a mix of female and male department heads. Each department head was telephoned for an appointment. During the meeting the purpose of the study and the importance of each person's involvement was explained. Each department head was assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Initial contact with the business education department

heads in the surrounding districts was made through a telephone call asking to schedule a meeting. Topics that were discussed during the meeting were the status of business education and areas of research that needed to be carried out. Each department head was visited at least two times before the question was posed as to their interest or involvement in a research study. During these visits the department head began to feel open and candid. All the department heads who were asked agreed to participate in this study. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Entering. All the department heads who were approached agreed to take part in the research. Letters were written to the respective school boards outlining the research project, giving a justification for the project, and naming the business education department heads who would be involved. Permission was received from the boards within four weeks. Each principal was contacted. This telephone conversation included an introduction, the purpose of the study, an identification of the participant, and a request to begin the research within the school. Permission was granted from each principal. Contact was made with each of the nine department heads to establish a time for the first interview. The interview times were always set by the department heads.

Developing a Relationship with Participants

In the initial contact trust was developed with each department head through our personal experience in business

education as teacher and department head. Discussion focused on the need for a study. An attempt to be truthful with the department heads was made by always explaining the next step and the time period involved in the process. If there was a delay the department head was contacted.

Some department heads attempted to test the claim of confidentiality. Questions were posed to find out the names of other participants. The department heads were reminded that anonymity had been promised to each participant. It was explained that each participant had been assigned a pseudonym and that discussion about what other participants said was not an issue. Once this was established the department heads seemed more at ease with telling their personal perceptions.

Prior to the first interview each participant was asked if the interviews could be taped. This format permitted full attention be given to what the department head was saying and not what should be written down. An attempt was made to arrive prior to the interview time. The time available for the interview was checked to allow the department head some time prior to the start of the next class period. Department heads appreciated this awareness of time and promptness. Only one interview had to be rescheduled because of a conflict and the department head was called in plenty of time to set up another time.

Data Collection

Data was collected using four different techniques: interviewing, journal writing, documentation and observation.

Interviewing

Each department head was interviewed three different times. All the interviews were scheduled over one month. See Appendix B, page 115. Each interview was at least 35 minutes in length and did not last for more than 65 minutes.

Tape Recording. All of the interviews were held in the business education department heads' office or the departmental office of the participants' school. This made the participants feel more at ease as it was on their own territory. The responses were the focal point of the interview so they were taped. The participants had the impression that the interest was in what they had to say and not what would be written down. Taping the interviews allowed analysis in more detail of the relationship that developed and the content of the interview.

The interviews were not structured which allowed the participants to define the situation, outline the account of the situation, and introduce notions of what they felt to be important. As Dexter (1970, page 50) states "... the researcher can adapt comments and questions to the unfolding interaction between themselves and the [participant]." Since interviews were held in the department heads' office there were interruptions. The tape was stopped and the reason for the interruption was written down, who or what caused the

interruption, and the department heads' response or reaction. Situations like this allow the "real person" to emerge.

To ensure that all the general points were discussed an interview guide was revised for each of the three interviews with each participant. This guide proved to be a checklist of topics or an outline. The guide was used to organize the content of each interview. The order in which the topics were discussed was not exactly the same in the interviews. The order depended on the participant and what they were sharing in the interview.

After each interview each tape was personally transcribed. The transcribed interview was then analyzed and reflected upon prior to the next scheduled interview. Based on the analysis an outline for the next interview was designed. Each participant was interviewed three times to ensure that each department head was asked all the questions.

Gordon (1975, page 61) classified one type of interview as "nonscheduled, which allows the researcher some choice as to the order of the questions and the freedom to attempt alternative wordings of the same question." This allowed an opportunity to probe concerns as they were mentioned.

Transcribing Taped Interviews. Three taped interviews with nine department heads were personally transcribed. See Appendix C, page 116. This served as a refresher as to what was said in each interview and assured that the content of the transcribed interview was correct. The 27 interviews transcribed into 281

single-spaced typewritten pages. The transcribed interviews were typed on one side of color-coded paper. The first interview was typed on white bond paper; the second interview, on yellow; and the third interview, on green paper.

Analyzing Interview Transcripts. The previous interview was transcribed verbatim before the next interview was conducted. The transcribed interview was checked to make sure that all the outlined questions in the interview guide had been asked. This analysis served as a beginning point for the next interview. If some points needed clarification or elaboration these were flagged for the next interview.

Journal Writing

Following each visit to the school personal thoughts were written in a journal. See Appendix D, page 117. The thoughts consisted of terms that were used by the department head, observed behavior of the department head, and a personal feeling about the relationship between the researcher and the department head. At a later time the journal was read and reflected on as lived experience. Some of the reflections were based on personal experience. Most of the reflections were related to the image of business education to people within and outside the school environment. More detailed reflections dealt with the department head's role in projecting this image. As a result of these reflections questions concerning personal philosophies about business education, the role of the department head, and the implications for the future emerged.

Documentation

One document requested from each department head was a job description. This document states the activities of the department head. Eight department heads were given a written job description from their administration. A floor plan of each business education department was drawn. The location of the department head's desk or office within the department was noted in terms of its proximity to the business education classrooms.

On-site Observation

Each department head was observed for at least one day. See Appendix E, page 118. Arrival time was scheduled to coincide with the department head's arrival in the morning. The observation evolved from the time of arrival until the department head's departure from the school at the end of the day. The only exception was if the department head had meetings to attend after school and an invitation was extended. This observation proved useful as a method to cross-check the interpretation of what the department head had said during the previous three interviews. Was the department head conscious of all the activities they were engaged in? The department head was observed as a "real person" in action rather than a person who had time to think and discuss their thoughts about their role.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the interview data involved coding the transcripts, transferring information to a chart, looking for the emerging themes and drawing a schematic based on the themes.

Coding Transcribed Interviews

In-depth analysis of the interview transcripts began after the third interview and the observational visitation. The interview transcripts were stored in binders. The questions were written or noted in the wide left-hand margin of each typed interview. The next stage of coding was transferring each department head's comments in point form to "3 1/2 by 5" cards. See Appendix F, page 119.

Transferring Coded Data to a Chart

The data was transferred from the index cards to poster-size cross-reference sheets (24" by 36"). See Appendix G, page 120. The pseudonyms of the participants were written across the top and the topics listed down the left-side of the page. The overall feelings and responses of the participants were tabulated.

Identifying Three Common Themes

Once the coding of the data was complete three common themes seemed to recur--activities, responsibilities, and qualities. Each statement on the cross-reference sheets was color-coded according to these three themes. Each comment in the journal was also color-coded according to the three themes.

Both the journal and interview analysis served as a cross reference of the information gathered from the participants.

Developing Schematic Diagram

A schematic diagram was designed to illustrate each theme. Each theme did not appear to have a beginning or ending point but was circular. There was also an overlap between themes. A smaller circle in the middle of the diagram was drawn to show the significance of the projection of the image of business education. See Figure 4, page 114.

Considerable time was spent analyzing the data, questioning the decision of the three themes, and trying to disprove the themes to see if any other themes emerged. This included the process of peer debriefing.

Writing

The findings were written through the three common themes that emerged. A schematic diagram was developed for each thematic chapter.

Thematic Approach

The three themes that emerged are: (1) qualities needed for the position of department head, (2) activities that a business education department head performs, and (3) the responsibilities that a business education department head is expected to assume. Each theme is the focus for a new chapter. The final chapter deals with the reflections on the collected

data and how this affects the image of business education.

Schematic Representation

At the end of each thematic chapter the corresponding circle in the schematic diagram is drawn larger. Within the larger circle are direct quotes from the department head. Quotes were used if more than one department head used the word.

Reflections

On Field Work

While conducting this research four areas of concern surfaced.

Role of Researcher. Because of personal experience as a business education teacher and limited experience as a department head, there was a vested commitment to this research topic. This commitment caused periods of soul searching and questioning, and periods of learning when to remain silent and when not to pass an opinion.

Ethics. There were only two occasions when two different department heads felt uneasy about something that had been discussed in confidence. They were reassured of their anonymity. It was explained that unless most of the participants had expressed the same opinion the information would not be included in the thesis. The identification or location of the school were not described in the study. To alleviate their concerns the data was analyzed and written according to themes rather than as nine case studies.

Appropriateness. The dilemma between subjectivity and objectivity was handled by carrying out the study in a locale that was unfamiliar. Relationships were developed on the basis of researcher and department heads, not on the basis of being colleagues. There was no prior knowledge about the department heads. There were no reasons to color the perceptions of the participants. There was no involvement in departmental concerns or problems. The only purpose of the research was to seek the department heads' perceptions of their role. The department heads were listened to and observed. Comments or suggestions to the situations were not made.

Politics of Field Research. For some of the department heads the interview became therapy sessions. The researcher was someone they could talk to and confide in, "a therapist." Some department heads said that they looked forward to the interviews because it was a period of time set aside to talk about their role. Normally they did not take the time to think about their role. On some occasions the department heads would ask what to do in a certain situation. An opinion was seldom given, but the question was redirected back to the department heads. Attempts were made to understand the department heads' perspectives. The department heads appeared to enjoy sharing their ideas about their role. They enjoyed talking to someone who would listen to their ideas.

On Analysis

More than one kind of evidence to support a conclusion that was drawn from the data as gathered. For each department head information was drawn from three interviews and the on-site observation. Once the data was compiled time was spent finding supporting evidence as well as trying to cross-check the data. Time was spent discussing reflective thoughts with colleagues to ensure that the decision had been reached objectively.

CHAPTER III

QUALITIES

Department heads feel that a department head has to possess certain qualities in order to be selected for the position. Some of these qualities are identified by the individual school boards, with input from the principal and other department heads. The written job descriptions describe some of these qualities as well as the remuneration, relief time, and length of appointment for the department head. Three overall selection criteria are identified by the department heads. Candidates who do not have these qualities usually are not shortlisted for the job. Those shortlisted are examined for more personal qualities.

Selection of Department Head. Some schools have a policy of selecting a new department head from within the department. Other schools open the competition to include any interested and qualified person within the school system. Normally a new department head is not selected from outside the school system. P states "it is another way of rewarding teachers who they [the administrators] think have done a good job." Another way of looking at selection is "they look for the good gofers, you know, the ones who aren't sensible enough to say 'no I can't do that'." One department head feels quite strongly that "it would

be more positive" if the positions were always advertised.

The selection procedure varies within a school system and from school to school. Applicants usually fill out an application form or a letter of intent. Those shortlisted are interviewed by the principal, assistant principals and/or teachers from any department in the school. Many questions during the interview are directed toward "what you feel your role will be as department head and ... what you think about extra-curricular activities." Once the department head has been selected the term of the appointment is usually not stated. Generally department heads are not required to reapply on a yearly or term basis. The person stays in the position until notified by the principal or board. As stated by S "it is renewable every year ... however the principal may decide that there should be a change in personnel."

The department heads feel that the basis for their appointments was their experience in business education and interpersonal skills. Their academic qualification is not a major consideration.

Written Job Description. Department heads usually are given a written job description. Some are quite specific while others are quite general. Department heads either contribute to developing their job descriptions or are given an existing one. It was implied that this document once received is not referred to on a regular basis. A copy is kept in their personal department files. Some department heads remarked that they

perform tasks not outlined in their job description.

One department head did not have a job description and stated "we do what we think we have to do." A further elaboration included "I have thought about doing that but whenever I have had a job description or dealt with somebody who has one the description and job have never matched so I didn't bother making one."

Remuneration. Additional remuneration usually is given to department heads. This varied from $1 765 00 to $3 500 00 annually and is determined by the school board. The general consensus is that the extra pay is not a major enticement when applying for the job. T states "the net [pay] works out to not very much. I am not in it for the money and I don't think most department heads are."

Relief Time. Relief time is assigned to perform department head duties during the school day. Time is determined by the principal and the length varies from 40 to 80 minutes in a day.

Length of Appointment. When department heads are appointed the term is usually not specified. Toward the end of a school year department heads may be requested to reapply. As S states "we have had to apply some years. Other years it sort of just carried on unless you are told that ... someone else would like your position." T states that "if the [department head] was not going to stay on they would advise the principal who would then go [through the process] of replacing you." Otherwise the existing department head retains his/her position.

Overall Selection Considerations

Three key qualities are identified by the business education department heads as being important for selection in their jobs. They are involvement within the school environment, interpersonal skills within and outside of the school, and an understanding of the business education curriculum.

Professional Involvement

The administrators of a school are looking for people who are well-rounded professionals both in and outside the classroom. Being familiar with the school's philosophy and procedures is essential. Department heads should support their department and also appreciate other departmental offerings in a school. As stated by S "it is a total school picture that you have to look at ... [because] there is an overall plan." Professional support includes "involvement in working with professional associations, for example the Business Education Council." Through active professional involvement the department head is viewed as a person "in the know a little bit more ...." Another area of involvement is "the willingness to participate in extra-curricular activities."

Interpersonal Skills

The title "department head" implies continuous interaction with a variety of people. Interpersonal skills is a key quality administrators look for in selecting a department head. S states that

> They certainly want someone who will fit in with the philosophy of the school but won't be a rabble rouser at department head meetings. Someone who understands the way the school is going and knows where they would like their department to go.

R added that "they look for somebody who will model teacher behavior kind of things they would like to see their teachers in the school doing." In other words administrators are looking for "somebody who is able to get along with people."

Knowledge of the Business Education Curriculum

As a business education department head is responsible for the departmental offerings a thorough understanding of the business education curriculum is expected. Department head B states that more specifically. Experience should include "having taught all the courses in the department." Due to the wide variety of courses offerings it is not feasible to expect business education department heads to have taught all the business education courses.

Department heads are involved in business education curriculum planning at the school level. C explains that "I taught just about every subject ... I knew the content ... I was a good background person." Most department heads infer that assistance can be offered because of their teaching experience.

Leadership is displayed when planning curriculum. T states "even though I am responsible for the curriculum for all courses ... we [teachers presently teaching same course] meet as a group [to plan curriculum]." P replies that "department heads are people who are really interested in their curriculum." S

elaborates "[we] have to be up-to-date with the curriculum development [to ensure that curriculum planning at the school is appropriate and relevant to the provincial recommendations]." Expectations of the department heads are summarized by department head B

> coordinating of courses for common testing and common curriculum, helping department members, and suggesting common resources to supplement the curriculum.

Personal Qualities

Two additional personal qualities contribute to the selection and continuous appointment of business education department heads. These are their ability to get along with people and diversity of teaching experience.

Getting Along With People

The department heads feel it is important to have an openness between the principal and themselves. They feel they discuss problems or concerns with their principals when the need arises. As B summarizes "... [I] tell the principal what I think and he tells me what he thinks and we can deal with each other."

Members of the department work together. Department heads encourage and develop these skills in their teachers. They usually initiate sharing among department members and encourage professional growth in each member. Initiatives like suggesting new approaches or new courses 'spark' the department members to change their course content or to incorporate different

methodologies. As a leader they should have the ability to delegate and "to utilize the expertise that department members have." T says that "mostly interpersonal skills are to keep everybody feeling like they are part of what is going on ... that their expertise is recognized and is respected and followed through on."

Teaching Experience

The variety of teaching experience is a quality that is valued as important by department heads. Based on this experience B states that " ... we are the most knowledgeable about the curriculum." B elaborates

> I think it is the department head's job to know or have taught just about everything in their department and to be familiar with the curriculum of all the courses so that there are some ideas and some base of finding resources or helping people find resources.

Most of the department heads teach "all the grade levels." This broad experience enables "us to find out what is best for the students." Some department heads have students working on special projects. Examples of student projects are "writing a timing program ... which [instructs] the computer to stop after the time has run out" or to "program a marks package that is appropriate for typing." Administrators ask questions directed about fundamental educational principles because they "think of you as the expert."

They ask specific questions like "how you feel about teaching typing on microcomputers compared to the typewriter." Problems are researched and their implications are discussed.

With the introduction of the microcomputers into the department teaching does not involve only the students. "In-servicing other departments and the secretarial staff on the new software is expected of the business education department." Some department heads are responsible for chairing in-service while others are expected to organize in-services using department members. All business education departments are involved in offering new courses. A few department heads are piloting new courses. As C states

> I am teaching a new course with very few resources. ... I am trying out things in that area evaluating what will work with the network what won't work with the network and ... passing that information along to the department members.

In addition to teaching some department heads are still collecting support materials, integrating them into their courses, and revising courses. T further states that "more than being responsible for the courses that I teach as a teacher I am responsible for all the courses offered in the department as well as the new equipment." R elaborates, "if you don't have expertise in an area you are responsible for seeing that leadership comes or is brought in [for the teachers]."

The frequently-used words stated by the business education department heads to describe their qualities are listed on Figure 1.

Summary

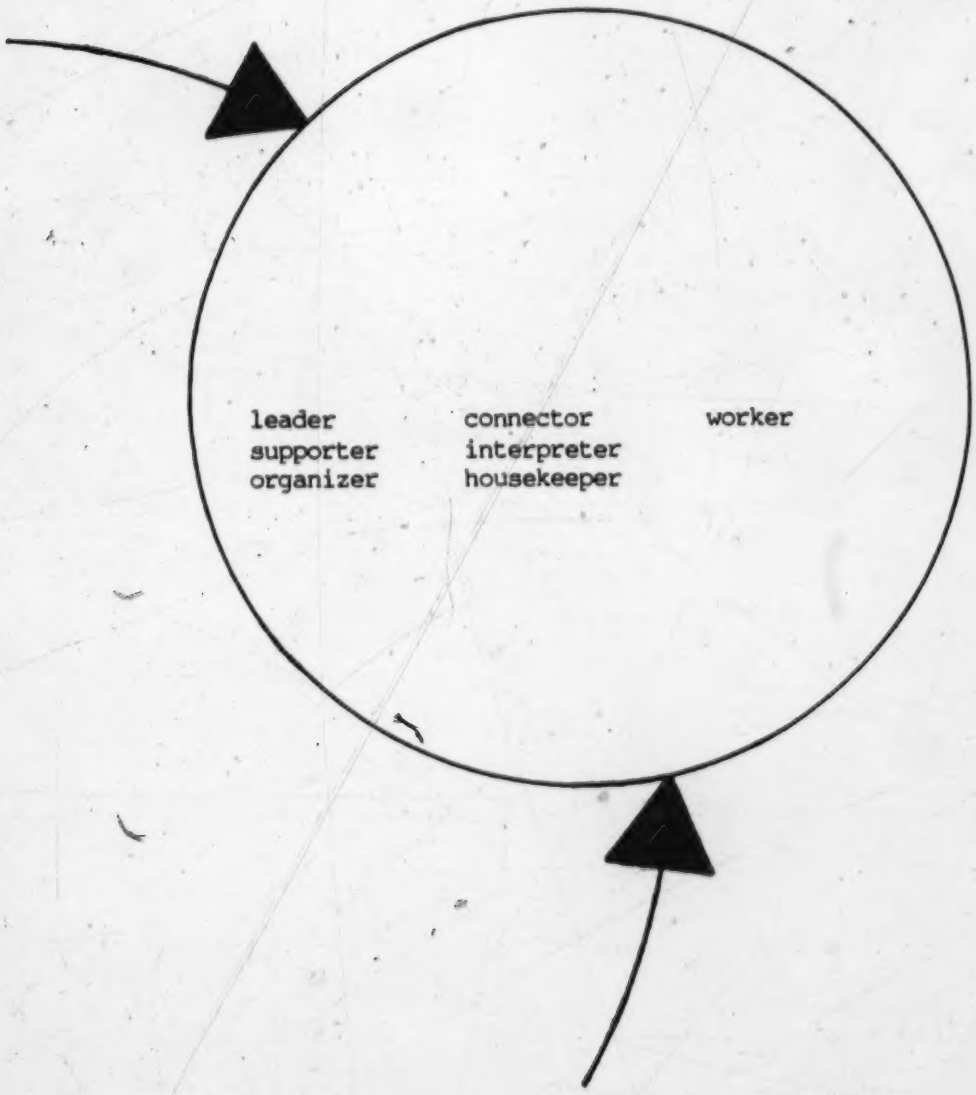
The person selected as a business education department head must display certain qualities. They are viewed as the

representative of the department and should have a thorough understanding of the purpose of the department, curriculum, and courses. Since there are such a wide range of business education courses a general understanding of each course is all that can be realistically expected. The integration of new technology into the department requires the department head to update and to seek out the students needs in order to offer relevant courses.

Teachers must display certain characteristics in order to be considered for the position of department head. There are three general qualities that are valued as essential for overall selection of candidates. The participants in this study feel there are two additional qualities that business education department heads are expected to possess. Are these five qualities valued as important for the selection of department heads in other curricular areas? Are the qualities identified by the department heads required and essential to carrying out the responsibilities of a department head? What professional development is offered to teachers to help them make an easy transition from teacher to department head? How extensive is the support offered?

Figure 1

Qualities Reported as Essential
to the Role of Business Education
Department Head



CHAPTER IV

ACTIVITIES

Beside the activities outlined in a job description, department heads perform a number of additional duties. These activities are initiated by the school administrators, the school board administrators, other business education department heads, departmental members, or themselves. The frequency, the importance assigned, and the people involved in these activities varies. Activities reported by business education department heads are described in this chapter.

Teacher

Department heads are assigned courses to teach. The teaching load varies from half-time to full-time teaching. Department heads find it necessary to leave their classrooms to perform department head duties. As R states "it is usually easier to leave the 30-level classes ... because they are given more assignments to carry out on their own." Department heads appear to enjoy teaching and this provides "the sanity" to their job. Department heads are asked to substitute for other department members. Examples of this are when the teacher is called away from the classroom or the department head feels that departmental members should have time to work on a curricular

matter.

Recruiter

Department heads interact with people, within and outside the school. The department heads valued some interaction more highly than others.

High School. Department heads are involved in recruitment of students for the business education courses. This recruitment is primarily directed toward the high school students presently enrolled in business education courses. As S explains "I visited all the Typing and Accounting 10 classes, Typing 20 classes, and any other class that a business education teacher would let me in." R "visits all Typing 10 classes at [registration] time." B adds "that I hope to go around to classes [outside the business education department] to talk to students about the program ... prior to registration." Three department heads do not recruit students from other classes but rather "all teachers in the department ... give a handout to grade 10 students and ask students what they are interested in" as S explains.

> One method of recruitment is to
>
> give an oral presentation ... acquaint students with all the courses ... tell them a little bit about each course and the type of student who should enrol in the course. During the oral presentation students can interject and ask questions ... or they can ask me questions later on.

Department heads infrequently accompany the oral presentation "with a handout which identifies all courses offered in business

education." Two department heads "show students what a business education certificate looks like ... and explain the relevance of this certificate." One department head organized a slide-tape presentation. Department heads are responsible for "assisting the department in preparing what is written up in the student course description booklet which is then submitted to administrators", explains R.

Junior High. Infrequently, department heads go to the junior high schools to recruit prospective students. B explains "the grade nine students visit the high school and [we] give them an orientation ... to the courses offered and what content is covered in the courses." S summarizes "we have not had close contact with the feeder schools. This year was the first year that contact had been initiated for a long time. That contact was directed toward the junior high teachers." Two schools have a grade nine orientation night

> where the department head meets with the parents and students. We do a presentation and hand out a sheet which outlines the courses in detail, describes the prerequisites, and illustrates in a flowchart how the students can proceed through high school.

Junior high students visit the high school but this is usually coordinated through the administrators and guidance counsellors.

Promoter

Department heads feel they are involved in the promotion of their department. This is directed toward other teachers in the school, administrators, students, and parents. S comments

> I have prepared a slide/tape presentation showing

> various classes and various things in the business community. ... offer a business education week to raise our profile in the school ... hold an internal typing competition and hand out our own trophies on Awards Night ... so we are recognized as people who are doing something within the school. We really try and do things for the rest of the departments in the school and make it known to the teachers that we are willing to do stuff for them.

T elaborates

> we have open house once a year meetings with prospective students and their parents. I am in constant contact with the junior high schools about the curriculum. ... I think that it is something that needs to be increased ... [I] find with junior highs and senior highs it is a matter of misunderstandings. I am very careful about my approach because I notice sensitivity and I really think that our population our program can be affected greatly by the junior highs. I try to maintain a positive rapport with them in that way.

R feels

> the best way of promotion is done by doing the absolute best job you can in the classroom ... making sure that what is going on in the classroom is what should be going on and it is positive. It promotes itself at that point.

C tries

> to make sure that students I am sending out to work have extra skills that they can promote that are good ... so the employer will come back to this school for future employees.

Another method as B explains

> [is to] put displays up in the classrooms and hallways. I talk about the program to whoever will listen--other teachers, students, school board administrators, or our administrators. ... the promotion has been with other teachers as well.

C elaborates

> our focus for promotion has been with counsellors ... to identify changes and the new courses that we are offering. ... communicating to students and

> counsellors through a newsletter and administrators and community at large by talking to them.

Communicator

Contact among different departments within the school is not on a regular basis. Interaction is more regular with the administrators and the guidance counsellors. S states

> we have had conflicts. ... like who should get the computers and stuff like that. When the computers were installed for the first time there was a fair bit of jealousy about the amount that was spent in business education. So we ran courses for teachers to familiarize the people who wanted to know about computers.

C comments that "we work closely with guidance. ... I give them a handout of everything so that they have the latest and up-to-date information on the department [to help counsel students into our program]."

Department heads feel they are the departmental representative on school committees. As S explains "sometimes it is me and sometimes it is not. If I feel that I might be the better spokesman I would take on the committee responsibility. Otherwise other people might want to do it." Another example is "we are expected to attend award functions as the departmental representative" explains T. R comments "I certainly represent my department in terms of cooperative program planning. I think we could cooperate with other departments an awful lot more than we do. ... never seem to have the time to get together." C summarizes that "I am seen as the go-between between the department and other departments within the school." Department

head S feels that the only time they work with other departments "is during Open House where we might combine with another group ... or PD day." B comments "that if somebody has a project that they are working on and I can help I volunteer my classes.... It gives the students really good experience and helps somebody else out." C adds "the computer teacher and myself have given a heck of alot of assistance to all the other areas in the use of software and using the computer for staff use."

Representer

Department heads say that they spend a major portion of their week in meetings. These meetings with people inside and outside the school are to receive and to disseminate information. P states "I think the meetings wear you out ... staff meetings, Faculty Council meetings, department meetings, system-wide meetings ... constant paperwork which is just endless." Once the meetings have been attended department heads report back to the department about the outcome. As C summarizes "the meetings give me more paperwork to do and require me to call more meetings."

Planner

Throughout the school year time is spent planning for the next school year. This involves discussion with the teachers to get their reaction of present course offerings. Time is spent analyzing the present enrollment figures and projecting the coming year's enrollments based on advanced registration.

Department heads are receptive to students' suggestions and feedback. Administrators have input into the departmental course offerings and sequencing. This input usually is in relation to the total school program.

Compiler

In addition to equipment, resources have to be purchased and housed in a central location within the department. As C summarizes

> to make teachers aware of all the new textbooks that are out ... and new material that comes. Any catalogues I get I make sure that they are sent around to the department and [teachers] indicate anything they would be interested in.

Department heads work with the library. The degree of involvement varies between the schools from "very little input is sought from our department" to "[the librarian] comes along regularly and says what books should we be getting for your area" to recommending "not only books but also audio-visual material and software." T feels that the "nature of the courses that we teach do not encourage alot of sharing between the business education department and the library." One department head attended a conference with the school librarian "to show how departments can use the library more effectively."

Infrequently, department heads maintain a departmental bank of exams. S states that "we have a file that each teacher is supposed to put in any evaluative instrument that they use." It is inferred that this file is not always up-to-date. Conversely one department head said "[teachers] maintain their own personal

files better. Therefore I have asked that each department member maintain files on each course they teach with a copy of each exam that is administered." Few schools expect all teachers to "hand in their exams to the office so there is a master copy in the office ... in case of a dispute." C explains "a master copy of all exams and course outlines [are compiled] at the beginning of the year ... in case of an appeal."

Updater

With the integration of a new business education curriculum and new equipment purchased through B.Q.R.P. (Building, Quality, Restoration Program) funding department heads have been assigned the task of in-servicing their departmental members. This grant provides matching dollars from the provincial government for hardware acquisition, building upgrading, and computer in-service for the high school business education program.

In-service

In-services inform teachers about the capabilities of new hardware, orientation to the software that is available and compatible with their equipment, and suggestions for integrating the software into existing courses. B comments "I haven't had to encourage teachers to update because the new curriculum and new equipment forced it all in one full swoop." S supports this "I haven't had to encourage them ... they know that they have to upgrade or else." T states "the department members were self-motivated." Whereas D feels "I did provide updating on a

limited basis to department members." C feels "the department head should coordinate activities with the department ... to consult and coordinate activities." B adds "I trained myself on the new equipment and then I taught the other department members." One department head said "we did it together as a department. We all took courses together." Initially P organized the in-service for the department "but now we go to the in-services that are put on by the school board." Two department heads concur with S "when the new equipment arrives ... we get vendors to come and give us an in-service for those people involved." T adds "that the department is trying to organize in-services."

Instructional Leadership

S felt

> that indirectly I am responsible for the instruction that is given on the new equipment but feel that I don't have enough time to get around to watch and make sure that department members are utilizing equipment to the fullest capacity.

C said "we discuss the instruction on an informal basis .... trial and error basis." R adds "I am responsible for providing instructional leadership but I don't do it personally ... I don't lead the instruction I facilitate it. ... and may bring somebody in." One department head "has been involved in providing in-services outside the department ... to departments that want to learn how to operate the new computers." Department heads are involved in integrating resources and software packages into existing courses. T is involved "in

converting simulations from stand-alone to a network system."

Maintainer

Department heads feel that equipment is a major responsibility taking the majority of their time. C comments "maintaining the equipment is a very important on-going responsibility, the main responsibility." R agrees "I am sure I spend a major portion of my department head time managing equipment." As B explains

> I am to make sure that the equipment is maintained ... call repairmen when something breaks down and to monitor breakdowns on each piece of equipment ... keep an inventory using the computer's database program. Prior to the installation of equipment I was responsible for purchasing new equipment. Contact with the sales vendors averaged at least once a day.

R adds "I try to really limit the amount of time I give to sales reps." C agrees "I am in contact too often with sales reps." S comments "inventory is my responsibility, I get the teachers to help me keep track of the inventory for their particular room and I sort of handle the whole picture." Three department heads still handle the inventory through cards rather than a computer. The inventory is housed in either the classroom, in the department head's office, the school main office or the school board office.

B has an added responsibility which is "the facility. It is up to me with the help of the department to decide what kinds of renovations we want and what needs fixed in our department ... to draw plans and make recommendations." C adds "in addition I have to sell the proposed renovations to

administrators before going to tender." Department heads are involved "in selling equipment that is presently in the department" as S explains. "We compile a list of old equipment and then organize ways to sell it." C states "to meet with department members and find out what their equipment needs are. ... always need to have more information about what one piece of equipment will do versus the other." T agrees "that I am responsible for setting the specifications for a particular piece of equipment." S specifies "that I am expected to know how to use the equipment ... I take minor responsibility for doing the minor cleaning on the computers."

Financial Examiner

Department heads are involved in the budget process. They are expected to prepare and present a proposal to either the administrators or the school administrative team which includes all department heads and administrators. Department heads consult with the department members while few prefer to work on their own. As S states "I have to type up a proposal which includes how much money I want, what course it will be used for, and why I need it for that course." One department head says "I go by what we had last year and if enrollment is up 10% I add 10%. The rest of the department does not get involved in this process."

Department heads prioritize the needs of the department. As R summarizes "we set our priorities as a department in light of the school priorities." S comments

> department members are encouraged to add suggestions for the next year's budget. I submit everything [rather than prioritize] ... I guess we know what is really needed and what could be cut if it has to be.

T states that "administrators make decisions on the proposed budget ... I go back to talk to them if I feel that items were cut that are essential to run the program."

Coordinator

Department heads are involved in assigning department members to their teaching timetables. Schools incorporate different procedures. Frequently, department heads plan the timetable for the entire department. S explains that "given a list of courses, the list of people who are going to teach in my department and the number of classes, it is up to me to divvy up who gets what." Other department heads analyze the timetable after the administrators have planned it. "Administrators do the timetable and I check it to see if there are any problems." Seven department heads involve their staff while two department heads prefer to work on timetabling by themselves. P states "[the teachers] feel they should have more input into what they are teaching." It is inferred that the department members like to have input into timetabling courses for the upcoming school year.

Facilitator

Department heads are involved in the selection of new staff and are expected to help new teachers adjust to their new school

expected to deal with the situation.

Select New Teachers

Department heads are involved in selection of new staff. The degree of involvement varied. As S explains

> the department head would be involved in the interview process. We ask questions which are specific to the department and can then inform the principal about the applicants familiarity with the curriculum.

Others were involved in the screening process and B states "we are able to look at the candidate on paper to give input or opinion ... recommend questions that are posed during the interview." Administrators usually consult department heads prior to advertising a new position. As T comments

> I will set the criteria about the courses that the candidate will be expected to teach and the required strengths of this person. I will explain to the principal the justification and then they hire on the needs for the total school picture.

R feels that "department heads should be involved in this selection process ... as it has great consequences for my job, the kinds of things that I have to do with the personnel who I have within the department."

Support New Teachers

All but two department heads said that new business education teachers were their responsibility. As B summarizes "... on a day-to-day basis the responsibility will fall on me ... curriculum, school policy, and procedures." S elaborates "I familiarize them with the surroundings here. I introduce them to all the teachers so that they get to know one another quickly

and provide them with textbooks and curriculum guides." C states "... involved in showing them the curriculum, facilities, and getting them a contact ... acting like a facilitator." Department heads vary with their involvement in this activity. D comments "that I have not helped the new teachers a bit I didn't orient them at all." S adds "... the new teacher is on their own and if they have problems then they come to me." P explains "the department is responsible for the new teacher" whereas other department heads feel this is their responsibility.

Solve Personnel Problems

All but one department head deals with instructional or procedural problems between departmental members. S states "I deal with the business education teachers ... if they are not following department rules. They don't like it and I know they are mad at me for a few days but they usually get over it." T adds "it depends on the nature of the problem." R specifies "if it is a conflict relating to curriculum I would get involved." Only one department head stated "that I have never had a problem. I would think I would be expected to talk to them and see if I can get them to solve the problem." C feels "administrators have become involved at my request so that they know what is going on too." Other department heads opt to deal with the situation first and then inform administrators of the development.

Assist Substitutes

Department heads are responsible for substitute teachers. As S states

> we have been asked to be notified when a substitute arrives in our department. ... if the sub runs into problems I want them to come to me first. I want them to know we have drawn up on various occasions a sheet on department procedures to give to a substitute who comes into business education.

Substitute teachers report to the general office and the department head is usually contacted. Infrequently, school administrators bring the substitute into the department "and introduce them to the department head." Whereas frequently, department heads are "expected to retrieve the substitute, escort them to the business education department and give them lessons plans, inform them of school procedures, and identify how they can contact the department head if the need arises" summarizes T. R comments "I am totally responsible to see that the substitute gets into the classroom knows where things are and gets going. I find that a difficult responsibility when I am teaching at the same time." S explains "... sometimes I don't even know the person is away. If everything runs smoothly and they have all their plans ... they just go ahead and carry on." In summary as C states "you just basically have to be around to steer them in the right direction."

Supervisor

Few department heads are responsible for teacher

student supervision.

Teacher Supervision

Department heads do not feel that they are engaged in teacher supervision. P states "I supervise not in a structured role ... I certainly know what the teachers are teaching." Department heads said "it will probably be a greater part in the future. ... will be asked to evaluate the members of the department which is now done by the administrators." S comments

> it is going to take alot of time and expertise to know what you are looking for ... certainly hope that we have a guideline to follow. I would just as soon that administrators do the evaluation because I really have very little power over my group.

C adds "we were told by administrators that we are not evaluators."

Three department heads are involved in teacher evaluation and feel they are engaged in teacher supervision. S adds "it is part of my job ... don't want to be too involved in the evaluation process ... department members would prefer it because they feel I know better than anybody else as to what kind of job they are doing in the classroom." T states "they have designated me as immediate supervisor." C states "I have to evaluate, I supervise in the sense that I have to know what is going on in the classroom ... if there is a problem the teacher comes to me first." R adds "I am curriculum supervisor not responsible for teacher supervision. ... Next year I will be responsible for department members in terms of curriculum."

Student Supervision

Department heads are involved in student supervision. This includes noon-hour or after-school extra-curricular activities. The supervision is carried out within the department or throughout the school. As T explains "hallway supervision is expected over the lunch-hour or between class breaks." T adds "as a staff member we are expected to supervise dances and football games." It is expected that all department heads will be involved in at least one type of extra-curricular activity. S said "that even though this activity takes time and sometimes I don't feel like participating in this activity. That it is good because the students see the department head in a different light."

Evaluator

Evaluation is carried out at a curriculum, department, teacher, and self level. The frequency and the basis of the evaluation varies.

Curriculum

B states "nobody says I have to but [the department] does it together. We keep ourselves on a time schedule ... we really did alot of the planning with the three of us." P adds "we do plan together. We go through the content at the beginning of the year ... try and get any new things that come in." S comments "we did alot of work as a department ... meet in

or cannot offer." D states "have been involved in a very limited basis on evaluation of the curriculum." C summarizes "not at this level. ... everybody is still pulling resources together. They are throwing out books that are still prescribed and saying these don't work." It is inferred from the comments that curriculum evaluation is not formalized. There is more a pooling of resources. It is also implied that departments work as groups.

Three department heads felt that they have evaluated the curriculum. S states "I have alot of input as to what is taught. ... I am the facilitator who brings the people together to decide did it work or not. Should we try something else next year." S adds "evaluation of curriculum is an on-going thing." T comments "at various times throughout the year we discuss where we are at, where we are going, what our end goals are." R adds "I informally evaluate curriculum." One department head said "every year we have evaluated the computer processing program."

Department

Department heads infrequently evaluate the operation of the department. Two department heads did evaluate the department operation on a yearly basis. S explains "at the beginning of every year I have to submit personal goals for the department ... and at the end of the year I have to evaluate whether the goals were accomplished." C adds "by my own personal goals I evaluate the department." R comments "I do evaluate department

plans informally as we make our goals for the next year." Department heads evaluate the department informally based on student enrollments, reactions from administrators and department members, and personal observations. Department heads do not feel this level of evaluation is a high priority.

Teachers

Department heads are not involved in teacher evaluation. Administrators evaluate the teaching staff. S suggests "I foresee that we will be entirely responsible for evaluating teachers in the future." Two department heads did evaluate department members. The process is similar but the procedures are different. T explains

> have a goal setting conference. ... before end of the year I will sit down with each department member and we assess whether they attained their objective or not. ... report is written up but it does not leave my office.

C states

> we have a pre-conference meeting where we fill out a form and indicate goals for the upcoming year. ... set up a time for me to visit the classroom I write down my observations and then fill out an evaluation form. ... then we post-conference together where we go over it. I keep the original and the teacher receives a copy.

At one school the department head evaluates a teacher teaching a class. At the other school the department head evaluates teaching only if that is identified as a goal for the upcoming year.

Self

Department heads do not evaluate themselves formally. B explains "I evaluate myself daily ... don't do a formal evaluation." One department head said the self evaluation is based on "the goals that are reached by the end of the year and the students enrollments for the upcoming year."

Two department heads ask department members to evaluate the department head. C elaborates "they evaluate me every year. ... administrators encourage it. ... Teachers fill out a form and then submit it to me anonymously." T adds "I ask department members to fill out a questionnaire. I encourage them to fill it out and ask for constructive criticism. They submit it anonymously to me." It does not appear that discussion about the form is encouraged.

One department head shared that a

> process of department head evaluation is put in place for next year. ... teacher will fill out a questionnaire, submit it, and discuss it with the department head. ... then the department head will take all evaluations and discuss the comments with an administrator.

Engager

Department heads are engaged in a number of professional activities. These activities are carried out within and outside the school. Department heads belong to at least one professional organization, act as cooperating teachers, and receive journals from various professional associations.

Professional Organizations

Eight department heads belong to at least one professional organization. The most common is the provincial Business Education Council. Four of the department heads have held executive positions on this council. Frequently, the department heads attend the annual provincial conference. However, they find that the regionally-sponsored workshops do not meet their needs. As T states "the workshops are directed toward beginning teachers." Little mention was made of encouraging department members to belong to this council. One department head notes "I belong to a service organization which is primarily professional women."

Cooperating Teachers

Department heads feel they are a liaison for student teacher placements. As R explains "a professor from the Secondary Education Department calls me when she is in need of a student teacher placement." Again the degree of involvement varied from "taking them under our wing" to letting the "cooperating teacher work solely with the student teacher." S states

> since we have so many varied courses rarely does a student teacher spend all the time with one teacher. ... they report to me and I divide their time up among the interested teachers. ... if there are problems I handle them.

Two department heads said that administrators are responsible for student teachers in their school.

Professional Journals

All but one department head said that professional journals are available in the department. The journals are "sent from publishers, sales people, and magazines that we subscribe to" explains S. These journals are usually placed in the department head's mailbox and the department head circulates them to interested department members. As R states "I am having difficulty keeping up with the reading. ... I like doing the reading but I have difficulty doing it." T agrees "I try to glance just to see what is going on and ... to see if it is not my particular expertise at the moment ... what is going on in that area." Or department heads "have a place in the prep room where we display them. ... new ones are left on the table for a week or so people know that they can go up and read them in their spare time" elaborates S. P states "we haven't subscribed to any magazines recently ... because we barely have enough money to get the textbooks that we need." It is implied that even if they did not have the time to read the journals they enjoyed that contact.

Researcher

Department heads are not involved doing any research. There appears to be little value attached to research. Department heads informally look at issues. As S states "we are informally ... checking with grads to see what kinds of job placements they have had during the past year." R explains "we have kept track of typing speeds over a number of times ... for

the provincial department of education ... we didn't do much of an analysis of the data ourselves." The data that is collected is usually shared with other department members but not other business educators.

The frequently-used words stated by the business education department heads to describe their activities are listed on Figure 2.

Summary

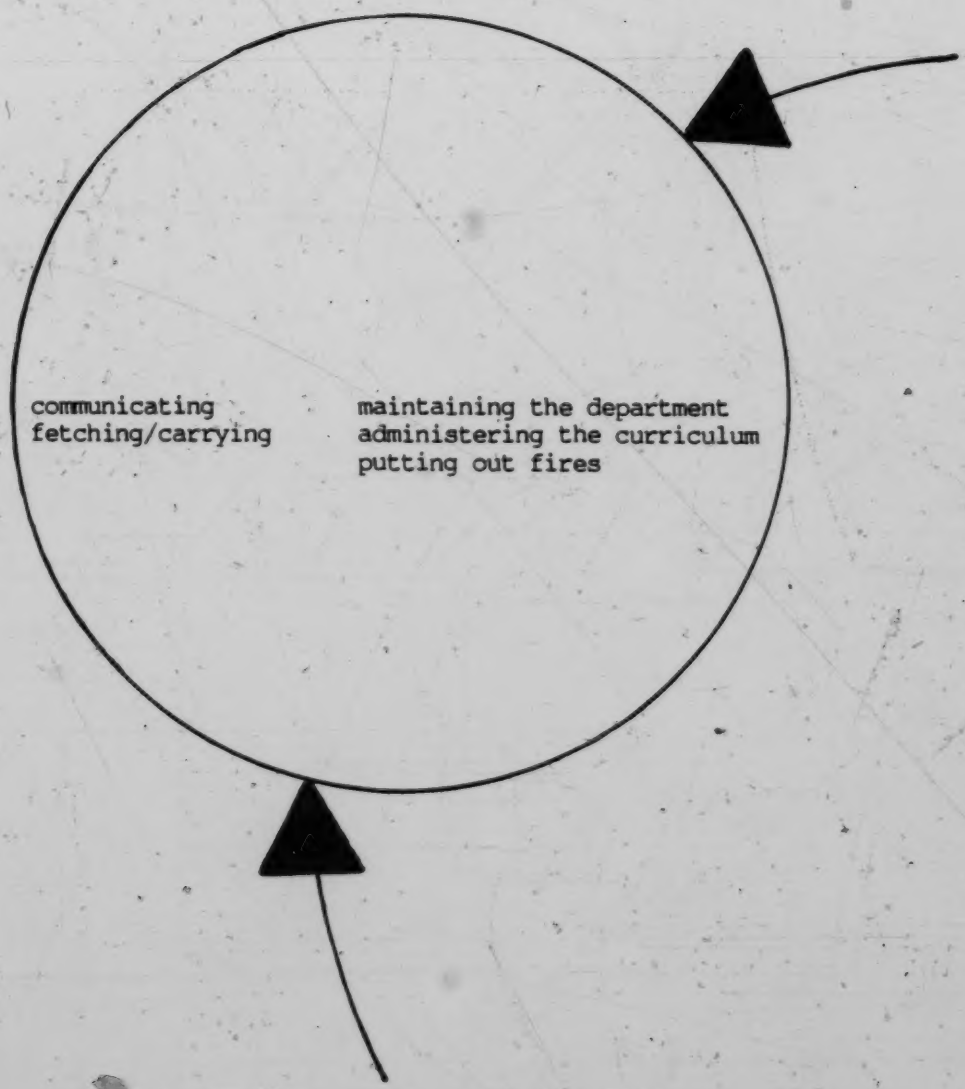
Department heads perform a number of different activities. There is consensus among the department heads about the type of task that is performed but the way it is performed varies. The value that is attached to the task varies.

Identification of evaluation as an activity and the methods to carry out this activity are not organized. Should department heads not formally evaluate the department, curriculum and themselves throughout the course of a year to improve the educational environment?

A number of the activities are performed to maintain the department and to facilitate the operation. Do all of these activities need to be performed by the department head or can they be delegated to responsible department members?

Figure 2

Activities Reported As Primary
to the Role of Business Education
Department Head



CHAPTER V

RESPONSIBILITIES

The key responsibility of the business education department head's role is the ability to communicate. This communication involves people inside the department and school and outside the school to the various stakeholder groups. The methods include writing, listening, observing, and verbalizing. This major responsibility is not reflected on the written job descriptions or in the selection criteria. Only one of the eight job descriptions specifically states "to encourage consultation and to build rapport by facilitating two-way communication among department members and between the department and school administrators, the students, and general community."

This chapter describes these channels of communication as identified by the business education department heads. Five issues emerged as important views to be communicated by business education department heads.

Student Contact

Department heads seldom see students formally. Two department heads state that they have infrequent interaction with students because of their role as department head. B explairs "unless you tell the kids who you are the [department

head], they aren't going to know. And they don't know what it means." P comments that "I don't think I have anymore contact than a classroom teacher." C concurs "[students] don't get in contact with me at all. The only students I see are my own students." Few department heads "go around to classes ... and talk about the [courses] that are offered prior to registration week" B explains. S elaborates

> ... I tell [the students] that this orientation is not to get them all taking business education ... but to have them make an educated decision about their options. So that they don't choose ... or reject a course by title alone.

Students contact department heads "if they are looking for advice. [Examples of the content of the questions] are program questions, whether they qualify for their business education diploma, or questions about a post-secondary institution" explains R. T adds "if students want specific information about courses or the location of a teacher" they will approach department heads. S notes "if kids want to talk about changing or dropping courses or teacher conflicts they will talk to me about it." This informal contact averaged "three to four times a week" with department heads.

Infrequently, the department heads visit the feeder schools to promote the courses offered in the business education department at the high school. This is not done on a yearly basis and occurs only if the timing for registration is right for department heads.

Own Department

Department heads are expected to engage in a number of different activities. A number of these activities are focused directly toward the departmental members.

Receiving Information

Department heads continually receive information and correspondence that relate to school policies or concerns, new equipment, new curriculum, or business education. This information is received in different ways.

Meetings are the major source of up-to-date information. As C states "I go to meetings and bring back the information." B elaborates that "[we attend administrative meetings] to make decisions and are informed about items that the staff in general should know and think about before the regular staff meetings. This information is brought back to the department." S implies that "whatever we discuss at the Faculty Council meeting I summarize and give [department members] a copy the next day." D explains that "we have staff meetings, to receive the latest information on what [this department] is expected to do."

Aside from formal meetings, department heads receive business education information from various informal sources. C views the responsibility as "just making sure that I inform [the department members] of anything that I hear firsthand and get it to them right away." This is either handled by written minutes, notes, or verbal interaction with department members. Magazines are sent to department heads by publishers or through

memberships in professional associations. Following the perusal of these magazines, if there is an article that may be of interest to department members "the magazine is passed along to them."

Distributing Information

In conjunction with receiving information department heads are expected to "disperse information" to department members. The methods vary among the department heads. Half of the department heads hold regular scheduled department meetings. C notes that "I was informed by administrators when I was appointed department head that I was supposed to hold lots of meetings ... and to communicate all the time." Meetings are held "as the need arises", "twice a month", or "once a month." These meetings are viewed as a method of "relating information to [department members]" states T. B adds that "we ... disperse information in a more personal way than getting memos in the mailbox." The reason for the meetings include "business education and the operation within the school environment" infers D. C elaborates that during these meetings "we discuss information that has previously been passed along to department members."

Half of the department heads do not hold formal meetings. It is apparent that the size of the department, the amount of free time that department members have, and the department heads' view of departmental meetings, determine whether formal department meetings are held. B suggests that "we have always

been able to sit down in an informal discussion in our office and decide what we want to decide." P adds "... with just three teachers ... if anything comes up we talk about it [among ourselves]. [P finds] it much easier to talk when we are all together in an informal setting." S states "that I hold very few actual meetings ... because whatever needs to be discussed I discuss individually with whomever is involved." D relates that "the [department] eats their lunch together ... if department matters come up ... then they are discussed there." C explains that "[department members] don't feel we have to meet on a formal basis. They [prefer] that I approach them individually because they usually feel less inhibited or just share true feelings about something in business education."

Department members can approach department heads. As R explains

> [I am] somebody to bounce ideas off of, somebody to get information from. [If] they are having a problem they see me as somebody they can come to discuss the problem and maybe get a solution, not necessarily but certainly work on solutions together.

Department heads contact department members if the need arises. S elaborates "if something comes up ... I am not going to call a meeting. I will just take it to the individual teacher and talk to them."

Distributing information includes more than just the department members. Department heads are expected to disperse information within and outside the school. This communication can take the form of "written correspondence" or a "verbal

presentation." Since department heads are viewed as department representatives they are expected to inform other people about the components of the business education program. As D infers "I am representing my department ... to ensure that their interests are transmitted and supported." S comments "... I really feel that at meetings and things I am speaking for the business education department."

Department heads "also bring input back to the administrators" states B. D elaborates that "... we are expected to communicate with other departments in the school and the administrators." At times T feels "I have taken their concerns directly to administrators as our departmental concerns rather than theirs."

As S states "I have contact with my group alot." It appears this contact is based on professional school-related concerns as well as on a social basis. C explains "that I am able to meet department members on an individual and a group basis to clarify curriculum."

Decision-making

Department heads make decisions based on their own experience and expertise. As S explains "we are heavily involved in promotion of business education and [the department] feels that it is part of my job to help promote the department." In conjunction with this expectation responsibility rests with whom, when, and how to promote.

Some decisions relate to teachers within the department.

As S states, "that [we] have to be ready to not always make the popular decision. ... and that you are going to have to sometimes discipline staff members." Other decisions as summarized by B are made "at the Faculty Council meetings ... in conjunction with other department heads and the administrators." The staff are not included in all decisions that involve the school. The department heads are viewed as representatives of the department and have input into the school-wide decision-making process.

Department heads make decisions based on "BQRP and the thousands of dollars that were spent [on their own]. The [department members] know how busy I was trying to set guidelines and directions with acquiring equipment and maintaining equipment once it arrived" explains C. Plus "decisions in the curriculum area are [formalized] even though we are not sure whether we are able to make these decisions at this time."

Consulting on Departmental Matters

Department heads are responsible for the operation of the department. Frequently, activities are performed in consultation with department members. Examples of these activities are preparing a budget, planning curriculum, ordering supplies and being a good listener. The process that is followed to establish the budget falls within department heads tasks. As S states, "[the department members] have to come to me if they want to buy something for the department. I control

the department budget." In conjunction with controlling the money department heads are responsible for "preparing a budget. They are expected to find out the needs in all the different course areas of the department, prepare a budget, and submit it to administrators" explains D. Department heads choose to carry out this task or talk to department members about suggestions for equipment and resources that should be purchased. Meetings are then arranged between the department head and principal or between all department heads in the school and the principal to discuss the budget. Department heads do not give the process much thought as it is an established procedure that is handed down from one year to the next.

One department head states that "I do alot of listening as far as [department members] problems go, encouraging or whatever else." Another department head spends alot of their time "running around putting out fires." These two comments infer that energy is spent in supporting department members and straightening out misunderstandings that have occurred between department members and other people within the school. In summary R states that "I am viewed as a team leader who is in charge of communication and interaction for the department."

The curriculum is the most important area that needs to be communicated to department members. S explains "I must be very aware of the curriculum. ... Be really aware of what is happening in business and industry so that you can keep the department in touch with that." T explains in detail the

process that is followed when planning a new curriculum.

> If we set a goal to try a new approach in Typing 10 ... we hold meetings to plan our action. All department members attend these meetings even if they are not teaching Typing 10 this semester ... to give opinions. Then we will have meetings with just the Typing 10 teachers for that semester [to finalize plans].

C agrees that "making sure that department members are aware of [new developments] in the curriculum" is a major responsibility.

Serving as a Buffer

Department heads view themselves as a buffer for communication between department members and the administrators. At Faculty Council meetings issues are discussed and department heads are asked to go back to their departments and seek feedback. This feedback is taken back to the administrators. Department heads approach administrators about concerns held by the department and expect action. As T states "it is a flow-through system for information both ways."

Outside The Department

Department heads are expected to interact with school personnel outside the department formally and informally. These groups of people are identified.

Other Department Heads

Department heads frequently communicate informally with the guidance department and formally with other department heads at the Faculty Council Meeting. The school location of the

interaction dictates whether it is a social visit or a discussion of a professional nature.

Guidance Department

The amount of interaction between the department heads and the guidance department falls on a continuum. Department heads informally contact the guidance department to inform them of changes in the curriculum, courses, or program. B states that "it has been difficult to even get the guidance counsellors to understand what the prerequisites are for our courses." Consequently department members check student records at the beginning of September to ensure they have the necessary prerequisites. P adds "I don't think guidance counsellors [check prerequisites] very well. If I say anything they get pretty annoyed." Half of the department heads say they "do not work very closely with the guidance department."

It appears that the communication with the guidance counsellors is not always open and amenable. B explains "this year I have worked fairly well with the guidance department. In previous years I have stayed away." As S explains "we really don't work very closely with the guidance department at all."

Guidance counsellors "counsel students as to what courses are available." Therefore they must keep up-to-date with changes that occur. Whereas D comments that "this was another role of the department head ... to talk to the counsellors." This department head feels that guidance counsellors "have listened fairly well." S adds that "counsellors encourage and

are really conscientious to make sure that they are giving correct information out about business education." Guidance counsellors contact department heads if they have questions about the program. S explains "alot of times the work is with individual students. Counsellors will come and ask me 'they have a new student coming in who is interested in such and such do I think this would be a good program for that student?'."

C adds

> I really didn't realize when I started ... how important that [this communication] was going to be. ... mainly due to business education having so many option courses and being changed so much that we have to constantly communicate to guidance.

C also feels that "it is important to have something down in writing so that [guidance counsellors] can share it [in their department]." Communication also evolves around the individual student's concerns. If department heads perceive a problem they "refer them to guidance" says P. Few department heads work with the guidance counsellors in planning Career Day and Open House.

Faculty Council

Department heads attend Faculty Council or department head meetings at least once a month. Most Faculty Council meetings are chaired by the principal and in their absence an assistant principal will chair the meeting. Department heads are expected to attend these meetings. This is the only opportunity department heads from one school have to work on a formal basis unless "a sub-committee has been struck to [research] a

particular problem" explains S. As T comments "in the past there was alot of sharing ... as to the feelings and how things were going." Suggestions for agenda items and discussions on these items were encouraged by the administrators. P states that "we make most of the decisions [that apply to school policy or procedures]." These meetings are held during the scheduled department head period. One department head attends meetings before school and "coffee and muffins are served at the meeting."

Social versus Professional Interaction. Department heads see other department heads on an informal basis. The informal interaction can involve professional or social communication. Department heads agree with S "we might spend time ... together talking about something that has come out of the Faculty Council meeting. There is quite a bit of informal sharing." Quite often this interaction "takes place over coffee or over lunch." T infers that this type of sharing is "not always positive." C adds that departments share resources in their school if they are working on a project that cuts across more than one department. This encourages interaction with other departments as well.

The interaction can also be social over a cup of coffee, lunch, or passing in the hallway. D comments "the informal stuff is when you see [other department heads] mainly up at the staffroom to have lunch, to talk and to chat." C elaborates "that I usually see them in my preparation time but that is on a

social basis 'hi, how are you and how are things going?'." One department head states that "I don't socialize very much in the school." Other department heads may come to the business education department to ask about computers equipment problems or advice.

Administrators

Faculty Council. Department heads have contact with the school administrators on a formal basis at scheduled Faculty Council meetings. Department heads and administrators attend these meetings. However S explains at this school "... each year we appoint ... one of the department heads to serve as the chairperson. ... we feel that we have more chance for input and the council is more ours than admin's." C suggests that "[the principal] has ideas of rotating [the chair] among the department heads." The purpose of these meetings is summarized by C

> to make policy decisions ... to kick around policy with Faculty Council members before [administrators] take it to a staff meeting ... to see what our reaction would be. ... they definitely try to sound us out as a unit to see how well it would go over in the staff meeting. They are also interested in each department taking turns in reporting on what their department has been doing.

T comments "it is more an information flow ... basically one way ... it is precise in that you know exactly what is expected of you." Another department head elaborates "[the principal] asks us to go see our department and discuss [items] with them and then bring the information back."

Informal Contact. D states that "alot of communication is done ... informally. ... if something comes up you go down to the principal's office ... go in and talk if [the principal] is available they will always talk to you." S comments that "all administrators are quite accessible." Department heads on an informal basis interact with the principal more than any other administrator. B explains

> there is an open-door policy. ... If I have a problem with curriculum or budget ... I go directly to the principal. In my experience if you don't go to the top guy somebody else has to go in anyway and interpret your questions. I just bypass them and go right in there.

Another department head states that "my main contact is with the principal ... and [we] report back from a meeting, ask for something, or discuss something they want to." C explains a new procedure of the principal is

> Every two or three weeks ... the principal and myself get together ... during my preparation time and talk about things within business education. He gives me what he has learned about business education or the feelings that he has about business education. ... I like that. It was usually me going down only if there was a crisis in the department.

Vice-Principal

Department heads are assigned an assistant principal as a liaison between the business education department and administrators. C states "one of the vice-principals will [be responsible] for business education and we report to him." However, few department heads interact with the assistant principal. As S explains "we have an assistant principal who is

in charge of business education but very little interaction occurs between us. He is not the most dynamic person." It is inferred "that the assistant principal is supposed to come at least once a year [to a department meeting]." That practice does not occur every year. T explains

> I am responsible for going to the assistant principal first with all situations. ... there are times when we have to make appointments when it is not convenient. ... there are a few times when I go ahead and make a decision and inform [them] after and it has been both positive and negative.

R agrees

> I have one administrator who is responsible for business education. ... it is much faster to go to the [principal] and I realize that I have done that too often at times. I have left the assistant principal out who I am supposed to report to.

In-Service. Not one department head was provided with an orientation or in-service by administrators when appointed to their new position. S explains "that part of my job is to define my role and my goals for the following year. If I have questions I can approach administrators as I have their support." T states

> ... the previous department head was probably my greatest help. ... had contact often and anytime I had a problem I phoned for any kind of advice. [Feeling from administrators] was ... it is yours go to it without even any general philosophy discussions or approaches.

R explains "[my orientation was] by trial and error. ... the assistant principal was a former business education department head. Who helped me ... because he understood the things that I was dealing with." R adds "I think there should have been a

system in-service to help people sort of figure out where they fit." C "had fortunately worked with good department heads ... and had seen the kinds of things they had done. If you had problems you could go to [the principal] otherwise [the opinion was] don't bother me." S comments "I just carried on from the previous department head." Two department heads were given "oral direction" when appointed to the department head position.

Authority. Department heads feel that if the principal assigns them a task they have the authority to perform the task. There are specific examples when the principal influences decisions. P states "[administrators] are very supportive ... and let you do your own thing." D elaborates

> ... most decisions that you make that relate to the school the principal has to be in approval of them. ... [D feels that] you tell them what your intentions are and that you don't expect them to do a whole lot toward [the decision that was reached]. They have got enough to do. They are glad to see somebody else is doing it. ... in the area of computers the principal was alittle more interested and wasn't quite willing to leave that [to me].

C agrees "the only area [that the principal has not let me make the decisions] has been the equipment. There has been alot of contact between administrators and this department." S summarizes "there are always times when you feel you are not getting quite what you want out of it. Sometimes you get it and you are quite happy but I guess there is give and take to it." R states "... I respect that the final decision is the [principals']. I do think that there has to be somebody looking at the whole school and I think that is their job."

Secretarial Staff

Department heads are in contact informally daily with the secretarial staff. Examples are "to handle telephone calls, to type announcements in the bulletin, to dialogue with the accounting clerk, to inform a substitutes arrival, and to question about repairs to equipment in the office." As D comments "they feed us any information, any communication that comes into the school for us. ... via the department head." A few department heads have the "secretaries do the photocopying, typing, and collating for us. ... the ordering of workbooks and handling of textbooks are also done in the office" as B explains. Sometimes the secretaries "will phone and ask if we have a couple of kids we can send down to help staple or collate. ... Most of the time they phone business education for whatever reason" explains S. One department head "is reluctant to send students down ... unless it fits the particular curriculum. Then the practical experience ... for that class is fine."

If visitors are expected secretaries contact the department head. "I usually let them know where they can find me so that it looks like I am half expecting [the guest]" explain S. C "instructs the secretarial staff to buzz me [when visitors arrive] and I will come down and get them."

Outside The School

Formal and informal interaction with people outside the school involves communication with parents, other business educators in the school district, representatives from the Department of Education, professors, and Business Education Council members.

Parents

Department heads are in contact with parents infrequently throughout the school year. The interaction may be on a formal or informal basis. Department heads say "we have very little opportunity to meet the parents" states B. Select parents are met formally at specific meetings.

> One type of meeting that may be held is a budget meeting in which parents are on the committee. The second is an orientation-type meeting where I am expected to do presentations to inform parents what the business education program is about.

Open House is another opportunity to meet parents. "We prepare all kinds of materials for parents ... about the program and course offerings." Parent-Teacher interviews is an opportunity to meet parents. However, department heads see parents of their own students rather than answering questions as head of the department. Department heads meet grade nine parents "for Grade Nine Orientation Night." Usually a flyer about the program is distributed to parents.

Informally parents "call about recommendations for equipment purchases for personal use or the office." One department head states that "parents also call and ask advice

about a program they are considering for themselves through Continuing Education." S comments "that occasionally parents will call and ask about course selection for their child as parents really get involved with course selection." In addition "parents may call looking for students to hire in an employment situation ... can you recommend someone who is graduating from your program?."

Very few department heads get involved in disciplinary situations. Administrators handle these situations. S elaborates "I have been involved in the cases with parents who chose to call me rather than an administrator. Or if the administrator gets involved and sees the need for me I have been called in too."

Another method of communication is the school newsletter. In this newsletter department heads inform parents of new developments in their program, new course offerings, and recognize students who represent the school in competitions.

Business Educators

Department heads see other business educators formally at regular monthly department head meetings or on system-wide professional development days. As S explains "each school is represented whether or not they have a department head. ... there is a department head or a teacher invited to [attend] all meetings." Topics of discussion "are more formal serious policy-type discussions and exchanges of information" and co-ordination of activities that affect the entire school district

"Our consultant is always coming up with new information and usually has new material for us to look at" explains C. Examples are "inservice, supplies for equipment, resources, problems we encounter. ... [And if there are any representatives] on committees they will give a report about what is happening and then department heads can comment." R states "these meetings are very valuable to me. ... I gain alot ... this has been a very supportive group ... when making independent decisions."

Regular contact with other business educators is maintained by telephone. S summarizes "there is alot of sharing, both formally and informally among department heads and they are a very good group." R states that "I am in contact with other [business educators] at least twice a week." S elaborates "at the beginning of the year when we are trying to iron out things or somebody is short of something we get together and phone back and forth and see what we can share." One department head says "you phone and get information, etc. Other than that [contact] is very, very infrequent."

During Professional Development Days few department heads allude that "we attend an in-service and then go out for lunch." "At Teacher's Convention usually there is time to meet, have lunch, or something like that."

Department of Education

Department heads think that the Department of Education's role "should be as a leader and provide guidance [illegible]

curriculum so that all parts of the province are teaching similar things in the same course" states B. S expands "they are sort of a watchdog. They come up with curriculum for us ... and we generally follow it." It is implied by S that employees from the Department will check to ensure that teachers are following the provided curriculum. The curriculum guides provide guidelines for each course. Also the Department "has supplied us with money in terms of BQRP grants to [upgrade equipment, resources, and facilities] within the business education department."

Department heads state that they are generally not satisfied with the support from the Department of Education. T states that "they aid in support of the implementation of the curriculum through ... teacher manuals, teacher in-service, and software evaluation." However departments heads feel "they are not communicating to the teachers. ... have no desire to understand what is going on in the high school as they haven't been in the schools" summarizes C. T expands "the software evaluation is ... already outdated. There is very little general contact ... not sure they [know] specific needs at the school level at times." B adds

> ... they have been no help at all ... dragging their heels at every opportunity. So that we can't budget we are caught looking to the school board as if we are ill-prepared. Our hands are tied, all the time.

P suggests "they need more expert people ... people who are right on top of what is happening." C adds

> I feel they have been quite weak ... in their

> communication to teachers on standards and evaluations that we should be doing together. ... we just find that without this continuity across the province we are not able to find the other business education personnel who might be doing the same thing that we are doing. ... they are communicating to principals and superintendents and unfortunately that information is not getting to us first and helping us to prepare within our department before principals and superintendents might jump on bandwagons.

C summarizes "they should have done the research or narrowed the field for us ... narrowed the field in hardware and in software and in evaluation." One department head says "I never really need their support. ... do alot of things on our own ...never find them to be too helpful." D states "that we attend workshops that this department presents. ... you get the communication via that route too."

Universities

Department heads feel they have very little communication with the Universities. D sees the Universities' role as "training business educators ... with both practical and relevant courses." The only contact is "in conjunction with student teachers." Individual teachers who are interested in working with a student teacher inform the University. Following the appointment of student teachers to a particular high school course selection is finalized. S explains the procedure that is followed

> in our department we tend to sit down with the timetable when the student teacher arrives and say here is what we teach what would you like to be involved in. ... to ensure that they get the broadest experience and the experience that they want.

Two department heads "feel there has been almost no other contact at all [with the Universities] and at times that has been unsatisfactory ... the placement of students teachers is not always appropriate." To add further "student teachers were calling us saying they want to come in for a pre-conference before we even receive the materials from the University confirming the student teacher placement." C feels "that I tap the University resource through the student teachers. ... [the student teacher] has just been there and knows the new and different things ... [this] causes me to take a better look at what I am doing in the classroom. So I can update myself that way."

One department head says that graduate students are another source of contact. "On two occasions they have sent grad students out to our school ... to discuss possibilities and help give them direction ... and to participate in research projects." Department heads say they do not know what research is being conducted at the Universities. The only way they find out "is if the person who is doing the research comes [to the school] and is looking for data or information." Only one department head mentioned that they informally hear what research is being conducted. R comments "there has been an occasional time, where there has been something published in the BEC publication ... from the University."

Business Education Council

Department heads have memberships with the Business Education Council. Other professional associations that are mentioned are the Alberta Business Educators Association (ABEA), and the National Business Educators Association (NBEA). BEC is the business education provincial specialist council. Department heads are members but presently do not hold executive positions. B states their role is to "give you enthusiasm at times ... and this is what the conference is for. ... adding knowledge ... dispersing knowledge ... sharing ideas." In general "more people should be encouraged to belong ... and participate." P feels BEC "should be a leader ... but they aren't given time to do that ... it takes time to get where it is worthwhile and viable." A few department heads say "they don't know what [BEC's] function is. ... it hasn't affected me in any way. Alot of people don't even belong." D adds

> they should professionally develop members ... [which they attempt through] organizing an annual conference, annual typing competition, and workshops. Maybe the members want it but don't want to be involved in it. I know I think it is good but I don't really get myself involved in it.

C comments "they should be communicating with business education teachers." S states

> they should be doing public relations work for business education in the province. ... Provide a vehicle ... for the exchange of information among business education teachers especially in smaller schools where they don't have someone to talk to all the time.

T feels that the conference program "[offers] too many options

and too many teachers covering too many specific areas. I would rather that they have a few more specific pointed types of speakers ... higher class and a higher quality." Plus

> I think the contact between teachers across the province even if it is not on a high level technical approach is a good idea. ... [it gives] an appreciation for what is going on in Calgary ... Lethbridge ... Grande Prairie. [This] is important to me to get a feel for the direction that we are going.

R adds "[the conference] ... gives a chance to look at things more from a global perspective. ... see publishing houses, publishers, preview equipment, and have a chance to look at alot of things."

Workshops are offered by BEC. However, department heads "have not been participating too much." The only communication from the Northern Region of BEC was a notice of a "drive-in workshop ... on a topic that is not that relevant." C states "the topic wasn't really relevant to us." S elaborates "it seems like [BEC] has died lately. . . [this is] the first communication we have received in a long time ... however the workshop [topic] has been offered to our teachers earlier on in the school year." Three department heads agree with T's comments

> ... when I first started teaching ... the in-services were valuable. ... over time in-services were not to the depth that I required as I got along in my teaching career. It seems to me that they are oriented to the beginning teacher.

Conversely, R says "they help us to be alittle more futuristic bringing speakers in and so on."

Department heads say they receive publications from

"publishers, and BEC." Department heads either

> circulate periodicals to departmental members who will be interested in the magazines, place them in a magazine rack for department members to browse through in their spare time or place them on a table.

General consensus is that there is not enough time for the department head to read all the journals before they are circulated in the department. One department head said "we used to receive alot [of magazines] ... now we barely have enough money to get the textbooks that we do."

S recommends that "the Business Education Council should communicate with teachers more in a newsletter format ... or aid teachers to get in contact with other business educators who are having similar concerns i.e. networks."

Emergent Views

Department heads share common views.

Room Classification

It appears that the designation of a room determines the type of interaction or communication that occurs in that room. Department heads have an office which is separate from the rest of the department. B states that the

> room is viewed as their homebase. ... where I store all my teaching materials ... filing cabinet ... files ... records are here ... and the telephone is available. We can sort things out. We are away from students ... a quiet place to work. Our department can't exist if we have to do our work in a classroom because we rotate rooms. ... [we] keep the office for business.

Department heads have found "that [they] must have access to a

phone ... phone calls come constantly during the day" comments S. Each department in a school has a preparation or workroom. Business education departments tend to have a separate workroom. The layout of this workroom varies. P explains "department meetings are held in the workroom." R comments "that is where the teachers spend alot of their time. ... where alot of resources for the subject areas are." Three department heads say "[we] eat lunch in this workroom." S explains "[the room] is closest to the department ... it is a nice, friendly room. ... provides close togetherness." T adds " ... because we are so busy doing other things at lunch as well ... departmental members stay in the workroom for lunch ... and because business education is a close-knit separate by themselves group."

The staffroom "is used for social activities ... lunches may be eaten here, coffee breaks, and after-school social functions are held. ... social gathering place ... a place to let off steam." B comments "I like to go to the staffroom because I don't have all my things stacked on my desk staring me in the face making me feel guilty." P adds "every time I have a break that [room] is the only salvation because I think you need to have interaction with other disciplines." D comments "I go to the staffroom for escape from my duties." T states "... people do go occasionally just to be sociable and be seen." Few department heads describe the staffroom as a place to work.

Most schools have a conference room. "This is where the Faculty Council meetings are held ... meetings with people from

outside the school are held here" explains B.

Role

Administrators, teachers in the department, and the department heads hold different views of the department head's responsibilities. From the department head's perspective

> Administrators view us as the line of communication. ... following meetings we are to hold department meetings to report back to department members as to what was discussed, get their input. ... [provide] input. When there are decisions to be made in the school rather than going to the staff as a whole [administrators] will ask the department heads. ... viewed as curriculum leaders,

explains S. R adds "the administrators are very supportive ... but they don't like to include the department head in terms of the school direction." C feels the

> administrators want me to run the department. ... look after all clerical work, act as liaison with office staff, make sure all the records are up-to-date, handle any equipment problems, order textbooks and supplies, and handle all communication involving the department.

B states "if the administrators want to know what is going on in a subject area they always go to the department head." C feels the "administrators want us to maintain law and order. ... somebody who is going beyond the classroom teaching aspect ... in initiating projects for the department." T explains that the department head role

> is to point out ramifications [for the department] of decisions that are made. ... as yet the discussions have been verbal ... However [in the future] I want to be sure that [administrators] understand these ramifications so will prepare it in writing. So that if anyone asks in the future how come you didn't tell us about that I can say there it is because it is

> getting to that point and I feel that is my frustration.

T adds

> you know the curriculum, the interpersonal relationships with the teachers, the encouragement. All of those things to me are what should be the main part of this job. But you find yourself running around putting out little fires or adapting to all these different situations and requests and things that are dropped on the department head.

R adds "the department heads are responsible for administering the curriculum ... which involves alot of different areas." Very few department heads view their major emphasis as curriculum leader. "... major portion of my duty is equipment, maintaining, operating and training the other people on it" summarizes B. S sees the role "as doing clerical work and acting as liaison for [the] department." C feels "the job requires working with people outside the department, other groups, other organizations, other professional organizations, and with system administrators."

Teachers feel department heads should "coordinate the department ... and have overall responsibility for the curriculum" states T. R adds "they feel I am a team leader." C feels "the teachers expect me to maintain the department." B says "the teachers see department heads as one who is responsible for the money." S comments "that teachers think department heads have alot of power ... as a liaison."

Needed Change

Department heads feel changes should occur in their responsibilities. More time needs to be allotted to research options and implications of each option before reaching a decision. Departments heads feel that they do not give sufficient concentrated thought to decisions that are made. As summarized by T

> I would prefer to be more in control of the whole situation. I think with the workload that there are lots of times I am frustrated because I have not had the time to adequately do the things that I feel that have to be done. ... You are required to do these things not required but if you have a responsible approach to all of these things you take on what you feel is necessary. ... Don't have the time to do the job adequately.

Department heads would like to have more authority on decisions than they presently have. They are curriculum experts in their department but feel their suggestions are not heeded. R states

> if I was given more time I would like to have more impact on teacher's methodology and preparation of teachers to teach the classes. And perhaps the selection of staff too. ... have more input. My job becomes difficult if I have a staff member who hasn't got expertise in certain subject areas.

This desire requires department heads to work more closely with administrators and other department heads to continuously think about what is good for the total school not primarily business education.

C states

> I would like an administrator to try to get a handle on the business education curriculum vis-a-vis contacting the Department of Education or University at times and asking what is going on. ... To basically shake the tree every now and then ... rather

than the department head trying to shake the tree.

Loneliness

Department heads say they have experienced loneliness throughout their appointment. C sums up "at times ... I have felt alone. And probably will continue to do so." T explains

> because business education is an area ... separate from the academic and in most cases vocational. It is in isolation and there are not many people who appreciate what it is that goes on in a business education department. ... complexity of the equipment and courses.

Department heads feel they have no one to talk to as T adds

> I don't think anybody else appreciates it and if you try to talk to other department heads, it sounds like you are whining and complaining about it. ... I talk to other business education department heads in the system ... they have a closer understanding to what you are going through. ... don't think the teachers in your department sometimes appreciate what you are going through. ... they don't have time for you.

R comments "yes I have felt alone. ... [am] not part of administrators not quite one of the teaching staff. We are somewhere in-between there." S alludes that at times there is no one to talk to "do feel that there have been times that I have been really angry about something that has happened." B explains "because of the nature of the people in my department ... they don't really want to do the job. ... they say you want to go ahead ... and sometimes they just leave me alone."

The decision-making process appears to be lonely for department heads. R elaborates

> ... decisions that we are making with BQRP I found those to be very lonely decisions. Administrators are really relying on the business education department

> head to make those decisions. ... made pretty lonely decisions and I know that those decisions in the long run might be really good or really bad. But they are the best decisions that I could make with the information that I had at that time.

D suggests "I got the feeling of nobody really caring what we are doing ... feeling of well you are appointed department head now do whatever you think you have to do."

Three department heads said they have never experienced loneliness. C states "we have a very closely-knit group of [business education] department heads in the system. ... if there is a problem you can phone them. ... the staff themselves support each other also." P states "I have no fear of going to administrators ... if I have a problem and they have always been excellent." S says "I can honestly say that there has always been somebody in this school who I have been able to contact whenever I run into a problem."

Burnout

Burnout is experienced by all department heads. They feel that department heads suffer more burnout than classroom teachers. S comments "[there] seems to be no let-up. It is just constant. ... seems to be so many things all the time. ... there is alot of pressure in the job." T adds

> department heads are responsible for [their] own courses plus also responsible for the coordination of all these different streams and types of equipment involved. We are responsible for the teachers in the area yet we really don't have a lot of say as to what those people do. ... just saying that you really don't have any control yet you are held responsible by the students, the parents, the administrators, and everybody involved.

C feels that

> your mind has to be focused on 15 different things at a time. ... full teaching load, all responsibilities for the equipment, meetings which give more paperwork to do, in-services, outside phone calls, equipment problems, student supervision, and expected to work on committees.

A number of different reasons are suggested by the department heads for the feeling of burnout. T feels that the reason for burnout is "I come in today and I can not prepare for the day because I will be hit with anywhere from 2 - 20 different varieties of little problems or whatever. ... the key is adapting." R feels that "I have got no time to deal with purchases, to justify BQRP funding, to try and sell old equipment, and to implement a new curriculum. ... positively I do appreciate the access to information that you have. It gives me a break from teaching." P adds that "the responsibility" is the reason for burnout. S comments "the decisions that must be made and if something goes wrong or doesn't come in I am responsible for it. It is a heavy burden to place on somebody." C adds

> I have to find time somewhere if I want to grow as a teacher in the classroom that has to come at night or on weekends or whatever. ... with the school philosophy of being involved extra-curricularly and curricularly it just is total burnout by the end of the school year.

The frequently-used words stated by the business education department heads to describe their responsibilities are listed on Figure 3.

Summary

Communication is a vital role in the department heads' responsibilities. A list of general activities is outlined in their job descriptions. Complementing communication is interaction with people on a daily basis. This contact includes people from within and outside the school. Interaction with people is essential in order to maintain a business education department that is up-to-date, relevant, and accountable. The interaction is through formal meetings or informal dialogue based on professional and/or social concerns. If department heads were given an in-service after their appointment they would have a clearer understanding of their role.

It appears that department heads are in contact with different groups of people. However, these people's knowledge, experience, or expertise are not utilized by the department heads. There appears to be a lack of understanding of how the different groups of people can be tapped as resource people and how they can assist in the operation of the department. Interaction among different resource people and the department heads is on a limited basis and is directed by specific short-term concerns. Should the department head not be tapping the many resources that are available? This may reduce misunderstandings and re-inventing the educational wheel.

Department heads appear to be carrying too much of the administrative load. At times to talk to someone who understands the education system but is objective is all that is

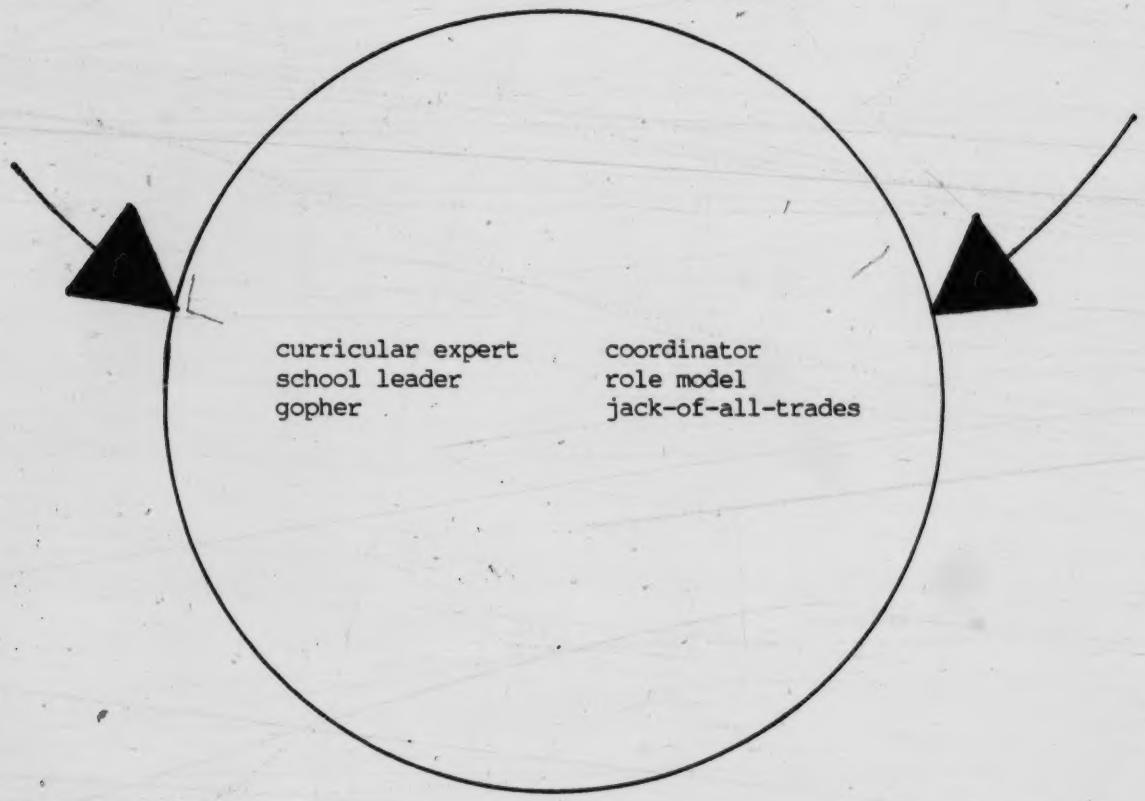
needed to solve the problem.

Department heads seem to be pre-occupied with the present situation at their own school. This should be a priority but attention should also be directed toward the future direction of business education across the province. Forethought enables business educators to act in a proactive rather than a reactive state.

Department heads are viewed as representatives of the department and feel they must get involved in a number of different activities which in turn encourages involvement in too many tasks at one time. This usually initiates the beginning stages of frustration because there is not enough time or energy to complete an activity in a thorough organized manner. Therefore, an option is to delegate the responsibilities to other department members. Once the options are identified and analyzed the department head can evaluate the ramifications of each option. This develops an appreciation of the direction for the department within the total school philosophy. Why do department heads work on their own rather than as one link in a circular resource group?

Figure 3

Responsibilities Reported as Primary to the Role of Business Education Department Head



CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary chapter of this study is divided into four sections. The first section restates the purpose of the study. The methods used in collecting the data are summarized and the conclusions are outlined. The second section of this chapter describes personal reflections. One part of the reflections focus on the conclusions of the study and the effect that they have on the image of business education. The other part focus on the feelings that the researcher struggled with while conducting this research. The fourth section identifies further qualitative research that could be carried out on the topic of the business education department head.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to come to an understanding of business education department head's perceptions of their role. This study provided a basis for department heads to question their activities within their school. Were they engaged in meaningful activities for the improvement of curriculum within their departments? Were all these activities appropriate for them to perform or should some be delegated? This study required business education department heads to

question the past, present, and future of the business education department in the secondary school.

Personal experience and extensive reading helped to narrow the topic to the role of the business education department head as perceived by department heads. Through qualitative research methods, this topic could be researched. Nine business education department heads were selected. The department heads were employed by four different school boards including both public and separate boards at the high school level. An interview guide was developed that outlined topics that were raised with the participants. Each interview was conducted and taped at the participant's school. There were a total of three interviews with each department head and the interviews lasted no longer than 60 minutes. All of the tapes were personally transcribed. Each participant was observed for 1 or 2 days for the duration of the school day to see who they interacted with and the reason for the interaction. The observation was directed outside the classroom teaching time. Documentation was collected from each department head. All but one department head had a job description. Notes were made in a journal about the observation, interviews and the job description and then these notes were personally reflected on at the end of the day. The transcribed notes and the journal entries were analyzed, coded, and thematized. Three common themes emerged from the data. The themes were: (1) qualities needed for the position of department head, (2) activities that a business education

department head performs, and (3) the responsibilities that a business education department head was expected to assume. A schematic diagram was designed to illustrate the interrelationship of the three themes and the significance of the projection that these have on the image of business education.

Personal Reflections

The recurring themes of this study focus on the qualities, the activities, and responsibilities of business education department heads.

Image of Business Education

The three themes revolve around the image of business education that is projected within the discipline and outside the school.

Qualities. Two desired qualities for department heads are teaching experience in most of the business courses and a working knowledge of the business education curriculum. These two qualities will provide a more knowledgeable and relevant direction in planning option courses to complement students' schedule.

Decisions are not made in isolation. People at different levels of the educational system bring a different perspective to classroom activities. Input from stakeholders is encouraged and incorporated into the business education curriculum. Both graduates and current students have suggestions for planning courses to meet their needs. Department heads as well as

teachers are actively involved in updating the curriculum. Department heads timetable to focus on courses they are interested in teaching. When teachers are interested the time spent on planning or organizing is both productive and positive. This enables department heads to coordinate courses. It is easier to offer suggestions and give feedback when viewed as an advisor rather than a developer.

Department heads encourage teachers to professionally update their teaching skills and the course content. Suggestions are offered for alternate teaching methods. Teachers are given positive feedback when situations arise. Since the department head is viewed as the curricular leader the feedback is viewed as a reward.

Department heads possess good interpersonal skills. Different approaches have to be used with each individual. Teachers need a clear understanding of the role of their department head. If there is teamwork the operation of the department is much easier and the feeling in the department is more positive.

In conjunction with improving the curriculum on a continual basis department heads continually sell their programs. This is a large responsibility and is organized and planned over a period of time. Promotion of a department is directed to many people inside and outside the school. Promotion to current students is on a regular basis. In each business class the departmental offerings are explained. This presentation is

organized by the department heads. Individual department members can elaborate on the courses. Promotion to the junior high students occurs when the department heads' timetables are flexible so they can visit the feeder schools. Presentations directed to the parents of the prospective students includes more than a verbal description of course offerings. Opportunities to visit departments to see the equipment and facilities are arranged. All interested groups require more than a verbal presentation. Displays designed to draw attention to the business education department are encouraged. Visibility is the key when teaching option courses. Students are introduced and encouraged to enrol in the courses.

Continual communication is necessary with the administration and the guidance department. These two groups need to understand each department's philosophy and the course offerings. A departmental booklet should explain the sequencing of business courses, pre-requisites for intermediate and senior level business courses, and the future direction of business education. These two stakeholder groups are continually talking to students, parents, other school personnel, and the school board administrators. If department heads ensure administrators and guidance counsellors have an understanding of the department, then they in turn disseminate correct information to current and prospective students.

Activities. With the implementation of the new business education curriculum, equipment purchases through B.Q.R.P., and

the Secondary Education Review, business education has been in a state of change since 1983. As teachers contend with integrating the new curriculum and equipment their focus has primarily been on survival. Who then is taking time to plan the business education direction for the future? Who is involved in disseminating the most recent information to administrators? guidance counsellors? feeder junior high students? business education teachers? Who is responsible for organizing the courses to meet the needs of the students and to ensure that the course content complements the intent of the program? Are these the responsibilities of the Department of Education? the universities? business education consultants? school administrators? the Business Education Council? the department heads? It seems that the most appropriate person for organizing the curriculum of a business education department within the school is the department head.

Department heads are given scheduled time to perform departmental duties. With a decreased courseload department heads perform these activities during the school day rather than after school or during lunch hour. Support for department heads is required from various stakeholders. Each stakeholder group within education has a different mandate. The major purpose of any education system is quality education for students. One classroom teacher should be on all education committees. This maintains a level of relevancy to committee work. Department heads can communicate the stakeholders' activities, direction,

and purpose to the classroom teachers. If communication is open, duplication is reduced and everyone is working toward a common goal.

The Business Education Council is the provincial professional business education association. What activities are this council engaged in that will benefit the classroom teachers? Do department heads feel that this association is providing professional support or growth? Should department heads encourage departmental members to get involved in this association?

The university is viewed as an institution that is educating prospective teachers and conducting research. Communication should flow between practicing teachers and the professors to make teacher education relevant to schools. Department heads encourage teachers to invest time and energy with the practicum to support and develop the transferability from university to schools. Research suggestions should be sought from department heads. A prevalent opinion is that research has little relevance to the classroom. Should department heads be responsible for voicing these concerns and interests to the university?

The Department of Education provides curriculum guidelines to practicing business education teachers. Many department heads feel that the Department is not communicating their direction to classroom teachers. Should department heads be responsible for voicing their concerns and interests to the

Department of Education?

Department heads are responsible for the operation of their department. Is this occurring? Do department heads engage in meaningful activities or are they preoccupied with minor tasks that could be delegated? Have department heads questioned the rationale for their activities or are they so caught up in the performance of these activities that they have lost sight of the focus? Do they discuss on a regular basis with departmental members the direction of the department?

Department heads are viewed by school administrators as a liaison with different stakeholders. Do they discuss with these groups the focus of the program and encourage their input? Do the guidance counsellors and administrators share the same understanding of business education? Do they have contact on a regular basis?

Equipment is a major responsibility. In order to purchase and maintain new equipment time is needed for long-term planning. Is the equipment used to its potential? Do the teachers feel comfortable teaching with it? Do department heads provide support and encouragement to department members to integrate the equipment into existing courses with the equipment used as a tool not as a justification for existing courses?

Responsibilities. Responsibilities are usually assigned to department heads once they have accepted the new position. These responsibilities are goals that people in authority are expected to carry out. Department heads provide some input into

their job description. They talk this over with their principals to determine if both parties have the same understanding. The description is revised on a regular basis especially with the new business education curriculum and the new equipment.

Department heads should be evaluated regularly as a department head and as a classroom teacher. This evaluation should be conducted by teachers within the department and an administrator. When there are suggestions for improvement support should be provided. Evaluations serve as a starting point for a new job description and goal-setting for the next year.

Regular contact with administrators is needed to discuss the direction, problems, and future plans of the department. If department heads are held accountable support and training should be provided. Frequently a new responsibility is given to department heads with no explanation, training or support. Contact is maintained with some business education department heads within the school district. This "network" implies to stakeholders that business education is attempting to be accountable for the program. The image of business education is higher to people outside the school. Each school plans with little communication to other business education departments and little support from the Department of Education, the Universities, and the Business Education Council. A school system approach should be taken toward the role of the

department head. Expectations should be similar in all disciplines. Planning about the role should include the department heads' input.

The inter-relationship of the three themes and their affect on the image of business education is shown in Figure 4.

As Researcher

The researcher was initally anxious about implementing this research method. However the idea of compiling data in the field or a natural setting appealed to the researcher. This type of research places the researcher in a very vulnerable position. Once the initial contact was made the "soul-searching" began. Questions kept reoccurring. What if the participants do not accept or trust me? What happens if they have changed their mind and would rather not participate in the study? The researcher gives personal background information to build trust but can not reveal too much.

At one point in the study the researcher felt that things were getting out of control. The participants appeared to manipulate the researcher. They controlled the scheduling of interviews and observation times. During the observation the participants could ask the researcher to leave the room at any time. Two participants altered the arranged meeting times. One participant forgot about an interview and it had to be rescheduled. The other participant constantly informed the researcher that they only had a short time always less than agreed upon. After the interview was started the participant

lost track of the time and discussed for a longer period.

The researcher struggled with the notion of what information is going to be given back to the participants for their partipation in the study. Department heads willingly gave their time and energy to share their perceptions of their role and let the researcher take part in at least one entire school day. They left themselves open so that the researcher could try and grasp their perceptions. Some participants viewed the researcher as "therapist." The researcher was viewed as someone outside the school who they could talk to and who was objective about their dilemas and concerns. The researcher, a former department head, had an understanding and empathy for the participants. The trust was appreciated. It was difficult not to comment or make suggestions about alternative ways of handling situations. If an opinion was sought the question was reworded and posed back to the participant. If advice was sought resource people were recommended.

Recommendations

Business educators, especially department heads, must be aware of the image being portrayed about the business education department. An option area promotes its program and courses within and outside the school to stakeholder groups to ensure a clearer understanding of the discipline is accepted. The three themes that emerged are interwoven into the image of business education. Each theme impacts and affects the image of business education.

There is a place for more naturalistic research in the area of business education. Teachers may find it time consuming but their perspective is needed. A similar study should be conducted in other parts of the province. Are business education department heads involved in similar activities? A study with more on-site observations to confirm what was said with what was done is recommended. Periodic visits could be made throughout the school year or daily visits during an extended period of time.

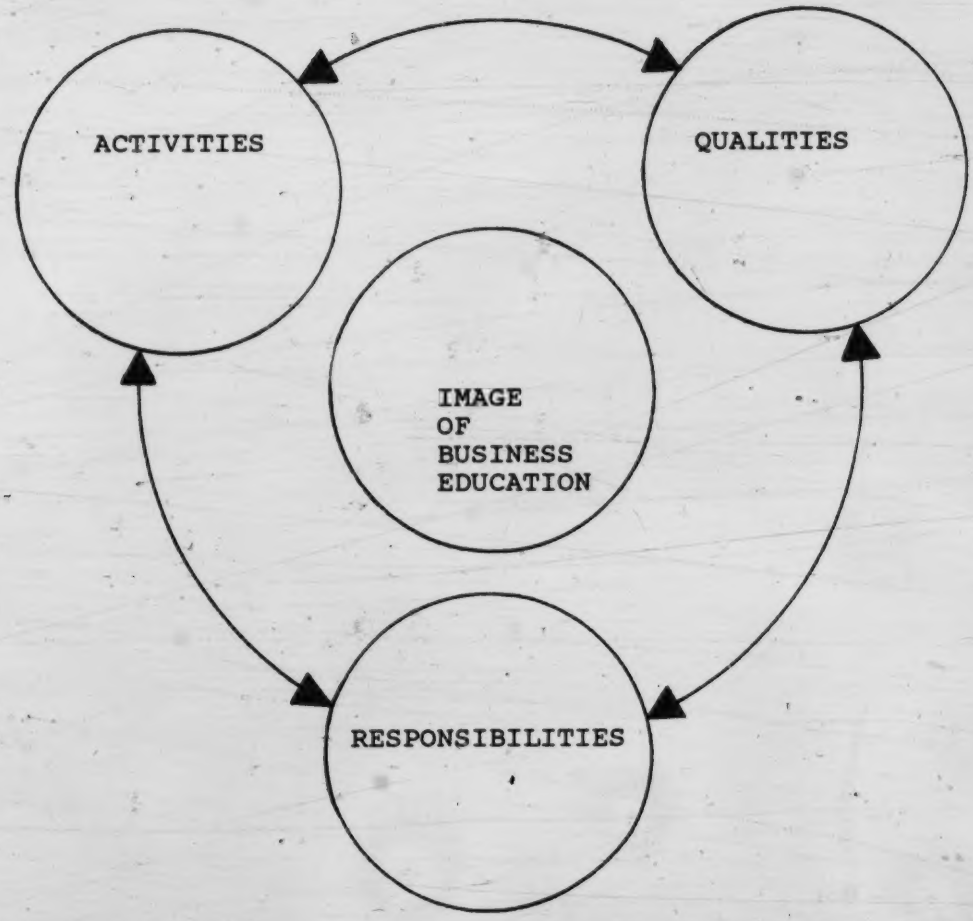
The impact of the Secondary Education Review, the implementation of the new business education curriculum, and the B.Q.R.P. funding, have affected the role of business education department heads. A similar study should be conducted later. What affect did these factors have on the department head's role?

Attention should be directed toward the written job description of department heads. Department heads should work with the principal to develop a relevant and meaningful description.

It is important for department heads to have a clear understanding of their role and that this understanding be compatible with various stakeholder group's interpretations. One method of achieving this perception is to visit department heads and engage in dialogue with them over an extended period of time.

Figure 4

Projection of the Business Education Image



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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

for Second Interview

Role of - Department of Education
- University
- Business Education Council

Conducting own research
Value of research

Course offerings meeting the needs of students

Present student recruitment

Future planning

Updating skills in teachers

Teacher promoted to department head because a master teacher

Educational training required before appointed to department head

In-Service granted for department head

Responsible for supervision

Involved in selection of staff

Help new teachers

How do department heads promote the department

Burnout

Evaluate themselves

Issues in the next five years

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule

Date	Participant	Interview
March 20, 1986	Betty	First
March 26, 1986	Pat	First
March 27, 1986	Steven	First
April 1, 1986	Don	First
April 3, 1986	Cindy	First
April 8, 1986	Sally	First
April 10, 1986	Tom	First
April 11, 1986	Rob	First
April 11, 1986	Carole	First
April 14, 1986	Don	Second
April 15, 1986	Betty	Second
April 15, 1986	Steven	Second
April 18, 1986	Carole	Second
April 21, 1986	Pat	Second
April 23, 1986	Sally	Second
April 25, 1986	Rob	Second
May 2, 1986	Tom	Second
May 2, 1986	Cindy	Second
May 12, 1986	Don	Third
May 15, 1986	Carole	Third
May 15, 1986	Sally	Third
May 20, 1986	Steven	Third
May 21, 1986	Cindy	Third
May 21, 1986	Rob	Third
May 23, 1986	Betty	Third
May 27, 1986	Pat	Third
May 29, 1986	Tom	Third

APPENDIX C

Transcribed Interview

INTENSIVE INTERVIEW

L This is my first interview with Sally at School C on April 8, 1986.

Sally, when I was out the first time, you gave me a copy of a sheet that was handed out to all department heads to consider for the new job description. Has a job description been completed?

Job description - completed at dept. head meeting subcommittee struck & reported back to us 2 or 3 times - completed in Jan '86

S Yes, it was done at the department head meeting. This is where the department heads and administrators meet once a month. We began the process at one of the meetings and a sub-committee was struck of, I think it was three department heads and one administrator reported back to us about twice or three times, I guess it was before we were finally satisfied with the description.

L And when was this done, just recently?

S I think we finally finished in January.

L of '86?

S Yes.

L Can I get a copy of that job description then, before I leave and then we will discuss it another time.

Paper all over - desk looks disorganized

S Yes, I will have to dig it out. (chuckles) Out of my very organized files.

L If I can ask you about the compensation that department heads receive. Firstly, financial - are you given financial compensation?

Financial compensation - yes, same throughout the system

S Yes.

L Are the department heads paid the same amount throughout the system?

S The department head is a title that is defined in the contract. I know that the school is given, because of its size, an allowance for x number of department heads. The school could

APPENDIX D

Journal

- phoned office to ask if there was a telephone call waiting — clerical
- opened mail, attached a memo to teachers, to ask for their input — disseminate info
- circulated info to interested teachers on computers
- received notice of job from employer looking for appropriate student help — student recruitment
- talked to sales rep about product and told him that there would be a delay in purchasing it, department head informed salesman that he would contact the sales rep when ready to make a decision — equipment
- attended a meeting with student - discussed course — student recruitment

APPENDIX E

Observation Schedule

Date	Participant
April 30, 1986	Betty
May 5, 6, 1986	Sally
May 7, 1986	Carole
May 8, 1986	Don
May 9, 1986	Steven
May 13, 1986	Tom
May 14, 1986	Cindy
May 16, 1986	Rob
May 22, 1986	Pat

APPENDIX F

"3 1/2 x 5" cards

D

Job description

- NOTHING WRITTEN

FINANCIAL

- Yes $1,765

RELIEF

- STRICTLY up to PRINCIPAL

D

SELECTION

- Job openings - FILLED OUT APPLICATION, RECEIVED LETTER CONGRATULATING D TO POSITION

APPENDIX G

Cross-reference sheet

	T	P	D
JOB DESCRIPTION	YES DRAFTED BEFORE T's TIME	YES NO IDEA WHO DRAFTED IT	-NO
RELIEF TIME	YES 1 BLOCK EUERY DAY (80 MIN)	YES -80 MIN /DAY	YES STRICTLY UP TO PRINCIPAL
FINANCIAL COMPENSATION	YES $3,400/YR	YES $3,280/YR	YES $1,765/YR
TENURED POSITION	APPLY EACH YEAR	YEARLY APPOINTMENT	APPLY EACH YEAR
SELECTION PROCESS	-2 INFORMAL INTERVIEWS -PRINCIPAL -DEPT HEAD	INTERNAL APPOINTMENT	- FILLED OUT APPLICATION FORM - RECEIVED A CONGRATULATORY LETTER